# BEHIND REVOLUTION, BEYOND REFORM: JOSÉ M. ARICÓ AND THE SEARCH FOR A DEMOCRATIC MARXISM

by

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A thesis submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Baltimore, Maryland
March 22nd, 2019

**Abstract**

Historians, sociologists, philosophers, and revolutionaries have all taken an interest in the relationship between Marxism and Latin America. One of the region's most prominent voices on this matter, José Maria Aricó, has become a focus of recent scholarship in various fields. Aricó, born in Argentina in 1931, engaged Marxism as a translator, editor, and author. He narrated the mid 20th century from the perspective of a Global South intellectual and was always in the process of searching for a distinctly "Latin American Marxism." Nested in Argentina's tumultuous period from the postwar to the the last military dictatorship, Aricó imagined himself in a dynamic national and global conversation. This paper will argue that Aricó's trajectory should be conceived as a whole, rather than in its disparate parts. It will read Aricó's later work in the 1980s as emerging from the framework he developed in the 1960s. Previous scholars and Aricó himself have conceived of his work along the lines of rupture. The Argentine military dictatorship from 1976 to 1983 stands as a historical trauma that displaced Aricó's thinking, sending him into exile and making the post-dictatorship present irreconcilable with the past. In particular, the post-dictatorship period's association with democracy became unconditionally opposed to the revolutionary aspirations of the 1960s and 70s. This paper will explore Aricó's theoretical approach to social and political categories by unearthing continuities in his trajectory, particularly around the concept of democracy, demonstrating how the periodization of his thought and the creation of exclusive categories can obfuscate important continuities. Ultimately, this argument points towards wider conceptions of rupture, memory, and socialism around the conclusion of the Cold War, and the persistence of these structures to this day.

**Thesis advisors:** Professor Casey Lurtz (primary), Professor Peter Jelavich

**Acknowledgements**

This project was made possible by the Dean's Undergraduate Research Office, funding my trip to Buenos Aires and Cordoba in the summer of 2018. I would like to thank my teachers at Johns Hopkins, Kenneth Moss, Peter Jelavich, Tamer el-Leithy, and many others. I would like to show my special gratitude for Casey Lurtz, who agreed to advise this project and read my proposal in her first semester at Hopkins, before I had even taken a class with her, and for tirelessly reading drafts of my thesis over holidays and weekends. I also wanted to extend a special thank you to Emiliano Connill, the archivist at the Biblioteca Aricó at the National University of Cordoba, for scanning me documents long after I had left, and helping me even when I was in over my head. I also want to thank the Centro de Documentación e Investigación de la Cultura de Izquierdas (CeDInCI) in Buenos Aires, as well as Libreria Hexis for selling me the volumes of *La Ciudad Futura* that I needed. I also want to thank Martín Cortés for answering my many emails about Aricó.

Lastly, I would like to thank my parents, Eliseo Perez-Stable and Claudia Husni, for their unconditional support, as well as my brother, Yaul, for being intellectually and personally inspiring. Finally, I would like to thank Kiera Wolfe for always reminding me that I was capable of finishing on time.

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## Introduction

In the southern hemispheric spring of 1945, Jose María Aricó, a thirteen-year-old boy, was elected by his classmates in rural Villa María, Argentina, to be their representative at a demonstration held by university students in the nearby city of Córdoba. The trek to the city was long, and he would be back late, but as the chosen spokesperson for the first-year class of Colegio Nacional Villa María, he endured. The university strikes were part of a widespread labor movement in Argentina that had reached its apotheosis amidst the imprisonment, and later release of social welfare minister Juan Domingo Perón.[1] Perón would go on to be elected to the presidency only months later in February of 1946, beginning a nine-year administration that has defined and divided Argentine politics to this day. One of the hallmarks of Perón's presidency was the expansion of trade union power, and the political integration of the working class.[2] In his journey to the provincial capital, Aricó would witness the strength and prejudice of these unions. After arriving in one of Córdoba's central plazas, outside of the *Universidad Nacional de Cordoba*, to listen to the student leaders speak on their demands, Aricó and other onlooking students were pelted by rocks thrown by the rail workers union.[3] The commotion caused the public meeting to disband, and became a formative experience for Aricó, who remembered this moment four decades later as his first engagement in politics. He would reflect on this episode as a monad for a broader disconnect in Latin America, where students, workers, and intellectuals found

[1] Romero, Luis Alberto. *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*. Translated by James P Brennan. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013, 91-100

[2] Ibid.

[3] Aricó, José M., and Horacio Crespo. *José Aricó entrevistas 1974-1991*. 1. ed. Córdoba, Argentina: Univ. Nacional de Córdoba, 2014. 103-105

themselves at odds over politicians when they all ostensibly made similar demands. Investigating the distance between what was widely desired and what was actually existing undergirds Aricó's intellectual trajectory.

As a reaction to this experience, Aricó rejected Perón and Peronism, and developed an affinity for the Argentine Communist Party (PCA), which he joined in 1948. The party's position with respect to Peronism had been unflinchingly critical, denouncing the movement as fascist, and dubbing it *naziperonismo*. In the 1946 election, the PCA joined the Democratic Union coalition formed against Perón, joining the socialist party, the social-democratic Radical Civic Union (UCR) as well as conservatives.[4] This unlikely alliance cemented the distance that was already apparent between the workers movement and the communist party, firmly placing the working class' political representation in the hands of the Peronist state. For Aricó, this was not a problem yet, as he would go on to hold various positions in the party's local Córdoba branch. His involvement led him to drop out of law school in Córdoba in 1949 in order to become "a professional militant."[5] However, Aricó's time as a "militant" in this period would not be defined by his brave, revolutionary actions in the face of repression, but by being sentenced recurrent month-long jail sentences for petty charges like public urination. Almost poetically, Aricó's time in and out of jail during his first several years with the party exposed him to Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, which would open his path towards his expulsion from the party in 1963.

[4] Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, 100-110
[5] Aricó and Crespo, *Entrevistas*, 105

Aricó learned Italian in order to read Antonio Gramsci and advocated for the inclusion of the Italian communist in the party's official literature and ideology, to no avail. And yet, the first Spanish translations of Gramsci emerged in the mid 1950s, primarily credited to Hector Agosti, then cultural secretary of the PCA. As Gramsci became increasingly popular in Argentina's left-wing, Aricó became simultaneously dissatisfied with the diversity of theoretical inquiry in the party.[6] Some of Aricó's earliest published writings, beginning in 1957, already express this internal conflict between the party's official, Marxist-Leninist ideology and the Gramscian renovation he wished to initiate.[7] This renovation was also intimately tied with crafting a real understanding of the Peronist movement that went beyond broad denouncements. As the effort to open up a dialogue intensified, Aricó gained funding from the party to begin a magazine that would stage a "cultural intervention in politics."

Aricó would create his first publication, *Pasado y Presente,* in 1963. Its aim was to foment an ideological debate within the party. However, the opening editorial, authored by Aricó, was met rather harshly. The party's response was not to meet this intellectual challenge with an earnest debate, but to dispense with Aricó and his collaborators altogether, expelling them from the PCA immediately after the publication of the first issue. The magazine and the rebellion ascribed to it has since become a

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[6] Burgos, Raúl. *Los Gramscianos Argentinos: Cultura y Política En La Experiencia de "Pasado y Presente."* 1. ed. Política. Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno de Argentina Editores, 2004. 31-45

[7] Aricó, José. "Prólogo a Notas sobre Maquiavelo, sobre política y sobre el Estado moderno, de Antonio Gramsci." In *José Aricó: dilemas del marxismo en América Latina, antología esencial*, edited by Martín Cortés, 53–68. Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2017. http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/clacso/se/20171117024109/Antologia_Jose_Arico.pdf

Aricó, José. 2017. "¿Marxismo versus Leninismo?" In *José Aricó: dilemas del marxismo en América Latina, antología esencial*, edited by Martín Cortés, 43–50. Buenos Aires, Argentina. (link above)

canonical moment for the Argentine "New Left." However, its calls for a new Marixsm that was compatible with criticism, expanded individual freedoms, and ideological pluralism fell on kinder ears than the PCA.[8] Although it was not the initial intention, the publication represented a break with the PCA both formally and ideologically, and the inception of a new path charted through the various ideological strains permeating Latin America in the 1960s. Along with the watermark of Gramsci, *Pasado y Presente* would engage Guevarist *foquismo*, and the unions of Córdoba's recently industrialized center. Aricó would revive *Pasado y Presente* after an extended hiatus in 1973. This occurred amidst a period of social unrest in Argentina, when the Peronist labor movements of the 1960s became increasingly violent and developed urban and rural guerrilla strategies to make their voices heard. Aricó and his colleagues would express critical support for the Montoneros and other guerrillas, but the government and its paramilitary death squads would prevail after a military coup in 1976 unleashed a period of state terrorism unparalleled in Argentina's history. The dictatorship led Aricó and his colleagues to exile in Mexico City, a center of agglomeration for Latin America's numerous expatriates in the 1970s. While in Mexico, Aricó would develop a more academic way of life, writing and publishing monographs, as well as giving lectures and courses. But the nervous peace of exile also gave way to a particular memory of the pre-dictatorship, militant past. This memory would carry on to the 1980s, cultivating the image of the young, radical man that was misguided, but in the trauma of dictatorship and exile, had remade his political project. Aricó found spaces for retelling, both in editorial and monographic

[8] For a sample of this, see Burgos, *Los Gramsicanos Argentinos* (2002); Cortés, Martin, *Un Nuevo Marixsmo para America Latina* (2015), the intellectual history journal *Prismas*; Ricca, Guillermo, *Nada por Perdido* (2016).

form, until his death in 1991. Presented as an advocate of gradualist democratic reform and an opponent of violent revolution, the rupture between pre and post-dictatorship became ideologically significant in the construction of a new Argentina.

This paper will argue that these ruptures, often made permanent by the exercise of memory, base themselves in political categories which are in a (reflexively) constructed opposition. Thus, the goal of the project will be to demonstrate intellectual continuities through Aricó's trajectory by complicating the "revolutionary" aura of the 1960s and showing how this period's emergent framework continued, albeit in vastly different political climates, into the 1970s and the 1980s. This framework centers largely around the idea of "democracy" as it was varyingly described and pursued by Aricó, often beyond its institutional implications. The multiplicitous definitions of democracy in Aricó and consequently in this paper tend to revolve around ideas of ideological pluralism, open debate, a unification of intellectuals and masses, and an abolishment of hierarchy. Along these lines, an argument for continuity will tend towards abstraction and privilege a linguistic analysis of sources in order to pinpoint and describe political-theoretical concepts. In this way, this project represents a history of ideas, their structures, and their mutations within the universe of a single individual.

Although Aricó had several colleagues that accompanied him throughout his life and collaborated with him in every project he undertook, I have chosen to focus on him for several reasons. One being, my interest in this project was not in the first instance because of its "Latin American" characteristics, but in the relationship between Marx and the non-European. In turn, this led me to one of Aricó's most famous works, and

still the only published English translation of his writing – *Marx and Latin America*.[9] This book sets out from the knowledge that Marx only ever wrote once on Latin America; a short and highly critical biography of Simón Bolivar published in a New York encyclopedia. There, Marx characterized Bolivar as a Bonapartist, and ascribed no revolutionary potential to Latin America. Aricó then developed a line of criticism aimed at characterizing this young Marx as still in his Hegelian stages. Aricó believed that Marx had only considered Latin America insofar as it *could* be a reflection of Europe, failing to explore the regions interiorities, idiosyncrasies, and possibilities. In extracting Marx from Marxism, or vice versa, Aricó treated a past intellectual, a past text, not as a finished whole, but as an object that retains political and theoretical necessities in the present. I intend to treat Aricó's works as retaining a similar urgency, pushing us towards a constant rereading and close-reading of texts.

As follows, one goal of this paper is also to engage a "history of ideas" of the 20th century that is conscious of the ramifications of "categories" as they are dominantly construed and remembered in the present. In this way, Aricó is not strictly the object of study, but rather an essential component of the project's framework. In narrating Aricó's work, and indeed in constructing an intellectual history of the Cold War, one must not only challenge sources along their stakes, claims, and contexts, but equally and profoundly question how the act of writing history is the production of a source in itself. This project represents another story that operates in a continuous lexical universe with the sources it is meant to interrogate as an omniscient narrator. Beyond "reading

[9] Aricó, José. *Marx and Latin America*. Translated by David Broder. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015.

against the grain," this approach constitutes a thorough (and Aricoian) philological revision (or self-reflection) of operative terms as a prerequisite for a lexical and morphological reading of a given "idea," "theory," or of the thinkers who produced them. Insofar as intellectual history is an exercise engaged in the reading of theory, it can just as well be an exercise engaged in its production.

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Insofar as this project constitutes an intellectual history of José Aricó, it also speaks to an emerging history of the Cold War that has refused the ideological polarity of the period. While some scholars have debated the beginning of the Cold War, there is an accepted conclusion to the 20th century's longest (non)confrontation.[10] The spectacular conclusion led to the hypothesis this was the "end of history" and the pinnacle of human development. Since then, any past communist or socialist project has been viewed through the prism of failure. The ideological hegemony established by western liberal democracy and its corresponding economic system was so pervasive that no alternative could be imagined, much less meaningfully spoken of. In this vein, the history of the Cold War was told teleologically, as a long march that was always going to end in the collapse of state socialism.

However, historians in recent years have pushed back on the teleological narrative, particularly by examining the Cold War's economic, social, political, and intellectual consequences in the Global South. In these numerous histories, authors have made particular use of a transnational and sometimes "translocal" framework.[11]

[10] Patrick Iber, for instance, argues that the Cold War's earliest period was prior to the second world war

[11] For a sample of this literature, see Priya Lal, *African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania: Between the Village and the World* (2015), Sigrid Schmalzer, *Red Revolution, Green Revolution: Scientific Farming in*

For example, Africanist historian Priya Lal's work on post-colonial Tanzania examines how a particular nation (and particular province) in the Global South navigated the Cold War's ideological binary with a brand of nationalist policies that were contradictory and often disastrous. And yet, Lal finds the memory of this period particularly informative, as it disguises and rebuilds perceptions from the "post-socialist" side of 1989. In examining the hyperlocal consequences of enormous ideological apparatuses, Lal situates the particular as essential component in the study of the abstract and the global.

Along these lines, this project will interact with a variety of literatures that do not speak to each other very often. By following a logical funnel from the global to the local, I can detail the historiographies essential to this work, and how they relate to each other. As an intellectual history of the Cold War, this work hopes to examine the implications of "New Left" thought, where the "New Left" can be construed as a broad ideological movement in the 1960s that called for increased social freedoms, and Marxism beyond the Soviet Union. By examining the New Left from the perspective of a thinker positioned outside of the geo-ideological poles of the Cold War, this work will attempt to show how these left-wing movements in Argentina can serve as a pre-history to the collapse of state socialism in 1989. This is not to say that Argentina was the globe in miniature, but that questions of revolution and democracy gripped the Argentine left from the late 1960s through the violent 1970s, developing into concerns over memory, history, and reform in the 1980s. Moreover, the *subject* of this work, a heterodox

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*Socialist China* (2016), Ernesto Semán, *Ambassadors of the Working Class* (2017), Patrick Iber, *Neither Peace nor Freedom: The Cultural Cold War in Latin America* (2015).

Marxist intellectual, keenly observed, contributed to, and imagined himself in a dynamic national and global conversation.

Between histories of the Cold War and Peronism, as well as Argentine scholars' studies of Aricó's work, historians and philosophers have considered the attempt to develop an "alternative Marxism," or a humane socialism, in the period where institutions were judged by their adherence to the perceived ideological monoliths of state socialism and free-market capitalism. The growing literature surrounding the intellectual and cultural implications of the Cold War has honed-in on how individuals escaped (and at times, found inescapable) the ideological binaries imposed from above. The European intellectual history of this opposition to both the West and the Soviet bloc has been well documented.[12] German and French intellectuals' opposition to both American capitalism and Soviet communism bore tremendous theoretical fruits; following this critical spirit was a persistent feeling that Marxism in the 20th century could always reinvent itself in spite of its crises. And yet, entering the 21st century the left confronted an irredeemable past and a future that "cannot be invented (except in terms of catastrophe)."[13] The pursuit of a salient third position in the Cold War often led intellectuals to a support for a social democracy, and while this form of more humane governance was achievable in Western Europe, and to an extent, in the United States, paths to a moderate position in Latin America were often so tangled and distorted by superpower influence that they were thoroughly untenable.[14]

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[12] Traverso, Enzo. *Left-Wing Melancholia: Marxism, History, and Memory*. New Directions in Critical Theory. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.
[13] Ibid, 8

[14] Iber, Patrick. *Neither Peace nor Freedom: The Cultural Cold War in Latin America*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015.

In this respect, Patrick Iber has made an essential contribution to the historiography of the Cold War by examining how paths towards moderation were perverted by superpowers that saw the region as an ideological battleground.[15] This is not to say that critical ideas producing positions beyond the ideological poles of the 20th century did not exist in Latin America – this will be in many ways the subject of this paper. However, Aricó's operation outside direct connections with states and "cultural diplomatic" institutions adds an organic element to Iber's narrative of superpower domination and propaganda. The particular example of Aricó's 1960s and his involvement with unions, armed movements, and the hope of a revolution that would produce a humane socialism, speaks to the complex position of intellectuals in the period, as well as the blurred line between intellectuals and revolutionaries. Moreover, the defeat of this movement at the hands of the state and the military dictatorship in the mid 1970s caused a dramatic rethinking of socialism's priorities in Argentina. The fall of the dictatorship, and the return of the same radical intellectuals to Buenos Aires, this time with a democratic government presiding, maintained a brief promise of a democratic Marxism in the 1980s. The techniques, institutions, and ways of thinking for the Argentine left had been *irrevocably* destroyed, and the 1980s then became a period of memory, self-reflection, and reframing. And yet, the memory of a militant past gave only a passing encounter with the promise of a democratic, peaceful, radical present, as the Argentine left and Latin America as a whole buckled with the rising tide of the neoliberal economic order and structural adjustment. In this way, rethinking what

[15] Ibid.

occurred amidst this national and regional rupture adds another dimension to the global narrative of a broken, melancholic Marxism in the aftermath of the Cold War.

Another important literature and history to consider is that surrounding Peronism, Aricó's relationship to the movement, and the regional consequences of national-popular ideologies like Peronism that gained a wide following across Latin America in the decades following the Great Depression and the Second World War. Perón and other leaders of the time politically incorporated the working class, both as a means to political power and also a path towards economic development. However, as Perón approached the end of his term, which was cut short by a military coup, his administration came to rely more on foreign investment and political repression. In some ways, the working-class movement spurred by Perón became larger than he himself could control. Historian Ernesto Semán notes that Perón's life in exile in Franco's Spain and return to Argentina could be described as "the perpetual and always imperfect attempt by Perón to put the proverbial working-class genie back into the bottle."[16]

Perón's ideological commitments, and his desire to advance a stable model of economic development that was neither Soviet communism nor American capitalism, morphed the left-wing movement in Argentina into a battle over representing a working class that had gained significant political power. After the 1955 coup, Peronism went from a state sponsored movement with aspirations beyond Argentina's borders, to an immensely popular but underground political movement. Outlawed from electoral

[16] Semán, Ernesto. *Ambassadors of the Working Class: Argentina's International Labor Activists and Cold War Democracy in the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017, 8

participation at the national level until 1973, Peron's Justicialist Party and the sectors it represented were tugged between resistance and integration to the system.[17] Perón himself remained fundamentally conservative, and leaders of confederated trade unions often agreed, preferring to remain in the corporatist state framework instead of aspiring towards a wider working-class resistance movement.

In this way, a mass movement developed in Argentina that was fundamentally left-wing in its political aspirations for equality and higher pay but was outwardly non-Communist and had a sour relationship with the PCA. Peronism came to challenge the ideological binary of the Cold War, along its fascistic, state-driven third positionism as well as its left-wing factions. Aricó's intellectual project emerges from this latter context. This is not to say that Aricó himself was a Peronist, but that he found it necessary to interrogate Peronism from a communist perspective, as well as its potentials (and drawbacks) in the construction of a socialist society. Navigating the duality of Peronism as a fascist diversion from working class resistance and Peronism as possessing a revolutionary soul produced a distinct form of analysis which consciously positioned itself on the "radical left" but intended to find ways to reconcile political categories and tactics that were often seen in strict opposition to one another. The Peronist (as well as Guevarist) student and workers movements that emerged from the Cuban Revolution's legacy in the 1960s became a focal point for Aricó. The famous labor uprising known as the *Cordobazo*, which took place in 1969 in Córdoba, became a springboard for guerrilla movements in Argentina, some of which Aricó and *Pasado y Presente* were informally

[17] James, Daniel. *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946-1976*. Cambridge Latin American Studies 64. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

affiliated with at different points. In reading Aricó's intellectual trajectory, scholars have bifurcated his development into the pre and post-dictatorship periods, with the revolutionary moment surrounding *Pasado y Presente*, el *Cordobazo*, and the brief affiliation with the Montoneros standing in direct opposition to the Aricó that had rethought and reconstructed his politics along democratic and peaceful lines in Mexico and Argentina in the 1980s.

Scholarship on Aricó has only hardly made it to the United States, but some interest has been noticeable in recent years. Haymarket Books published an English translation of *Marx and Latin America*, thus far the only published English translation of his work. Ann Freedland's recent dissertation in the romance languages department at Columbia University deals with Aricó's semi-autobiographical work *La Cola del Diablo* in some depth. In this way, it becomes imperative to look for literature surrounding Aricó's work in Argnetina, where there has been a surge of interest in his life, work, and theories beginning in 2002 with the release of Raul Búrgos' work *Los Gramscianos Argentinos*. Burgos' work set the bar for scholarship on the *Pasado y Presente* group, illuminating a previously untold history of the 1960s through interviews with the living members of the cohort.[18] Burgos details Aricó's intellectual trajectory from his inspirations in the 1950s, the *Pasado y Presente* experience in the 1960s, and the armed resistance of the early 1970s. Burgos' work emphasizes the earlier sections of Aricó's life and influence, charting his path through the ranks of the communist party and the network of intellectuals he formed a part of in Córdoba, both within the party

[18] Búrgos, Raul. *Los Gramscianos Argentinos: Cultura y Política en la Experiencia de "Pasado y Presente."* 1. ed. Política. Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno de Argentina Editores, 2004.

and outside of it. Although Burgos does a tremendous job of tracing the paths taken by the prominent members of *Pasado y Presente*, he rarely undertakes a profound examination of Aricó's thought. Instead, Burgos focuses on valuable archival and oral sources to stitch together the narrative of how Aricó and *Pasado y Presente* coalesced into an intellectual group. This, as well as Burgos' strong focus on the pre-dictatorship period, leaves few pages to compare *Pasado y Presente* with Aricó's later editorial projects, such as his magazine while in exile, *Controversia*, or upon his return, *La Ciudad Futura*.[19]

Although profound studies have been written on the nature of *Pasado y Presente*, and also of other editorial and monographical projects, comparison across time has been few and far between.[20] Philsopher Martín Cortés has written extensively on Aricó, and his work *A New Marxism for Latin America* examines Aricó's landmark projects and experiences, putting a new lens on his trajectory, as a "profound inquiry into the kind of Marxism that would be productive in Latin America."[21] In his desire to leave no stone unturned, Aricó produced an immensely diverse *œuvre*. Cortes does not wish to find continuities here, but to examine the possibilities that Aricó's expansive methods of translation, editorial work, and authorship, can open up. Rather than finding distinct ideological continuities, Cortés posits that Aricó must be thought of on the basis of rupture, if only because Aricó himself reflected on his experiences in this way. Picking

[19] "Controversia y La Ciudad Futura: democracia y socialismo en debate / Controversia and La Ciudad Futura: democracy and socialism under debate," n.d. 26

[20] For further information, see the 2014 issue of *Prismas - Revista de Historia Intelectual*, http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=387036833020

[21] Cortés, Martín. *Un nuevo marxismo para América Latina: José Aricó: traductor, editor, intelectual.* Sociología y política. México, DF ; Buenos Aires, Argentina: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2015, 12

up this strand of Aricó's multitudes – as a translator, editor, and author, I will hope to complicate not only the ruptures in his trajectory, but how Aricó's trajectory complicates our relationship to a past that is always already remembered under the guise of failure. Aricó's trajectory demonstrates the ability to question the imprisoning dichotomies of our past that are constantly refracted into the present. In examining our collective consciousness with the rise of a "new" fascism, a new reconstruction of the past can become a form of resistance, gesturing towards paths for the future. In this way, Aricó's work becomes valuable as a history of ideas, as well as a historiographical and intellectual method.

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Some necessary context has been covered earlier in the introduction, which will be important to the remainder of the work. The thesis is split up into three chapters, roughly corresponding to the three major editorial projects Aricó undertook, although much more attention is paid to *Pasado y Presente* and *La Ciudad Futura* than *Controversia*. The first section will pick up in the early 1960s, amidst the publication of Aricó's first editorial works in *Pasado y Presente*. Particular attention will be paid to the importance of Córdoba's burgeoning industrial prominence, and how this cultivated an environment where Aricó's "critical Marxism" could thrive. Couching the primary material in the Cordoba's local context, this section will close read two of Aricó's editorials from the period, both of which posit more abstract political-theoretical aspirations. This section will then explore the importance Aricó ascribed to the magazine as a medium of political engagement. He conceived the magazine as method of politically organizing an intellectual class that would be unified with the working class. Ultimately, I will argue that Aricó begins to construct an "Argentine dialectic" in

the 1960s, a synergetic political framework that aims to deepen and broaden the reach of Marxist theory through an ideological democratization of its political structures.

The second chapter will examine how Aricó has remembered the 1960s and the 1970s. That is, how he has remembered and created an understanding of his work with *Pasado y Presente* that cultivates it as a separate, independent political moment in the wake of Aricó's exile in Mexico City. However, the chapter will still be narrated largely chronologically, beginning in the late 1960s and examining Aricó's authorship with *Pasado y Presente*'s revival in 1973. After reading one of his editorials in the early 1970s, the chapter will turn to an interview Aricó granted in 1984 after returning to Argentina. In this moment, I will investigate how conceptions of rupture between the "revolutionary" moment of the early 1970s and the nervous peace of exile in the late 1970s and early 1980s are based in Aricó's portrayal of himself and his intellectual work. By cultivating an image that kept his young, radical self at a safe distance, accessible but not revivable, Aricó undertook an intellectual "remake." The late 1970s and 1980s saw him position himself as both an advocate of gradualist democratic reform and an opponent of violent revolution, even if these positions were not necessarily enormous departures from his romantic revolutionary years.

In the third and final section of the work, I will turn my attention to Aricó's full throated "democratic" moment, his return to Argentina, and the publication of his third editorial effort *La Ciudad Futura* as well as some of his historiographical work. In these publications, pluralistic democracy begin to emerge as a method, and theoretical consistencies with *Pasado y Presente* are revisited. In this final chapter, we begin to see and describe how the magazine as a medium, democracy as a method, and redemption as a historiography intersect to produce what one might call parallel "Aricoian"

reconciliations between the past and present, revolution and reform, socialism and democracy, and so on and so forth. Along these lines, the goal will be to project democracy as coterminous with Aricó's theoretical method, and to examine how this method comes to be deployed over the course of his trajectory.

In conclusion, one should treat Aricó's trajectory as a perpetual search for a political anchorage, and his writings as descriptive testimonies of this search. A search that, in his words, remains unfinished.[22]

[22] Aricó, José M. *La cola del diablo: itinerario de Gramsci en América Latina*. 1. ed. Colleción Metamórfosis. Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno Ed, 2005, 30.

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## Part I

## Between Party and Publication: An Argentine Dialectic in the 1960s

*To tell the truth is revolutionary*

*-Antonio Gramsci*

In the late 1950s, as a young member of the Argentine Communist Party (PCA) where his involvement had led him to drop out of university, José María Aricó began to read the works of Italian communist Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci's arrival to Latin America in 1951, primarily in the Southern Cone, proved to have an enormous impact on the region's communists, many of whom were seeking alternatives to the Marxist-Leninist tradition exemplified by the Soviet Union. For Aricó, this meant learning Italian in order to read *The Prison Notebooks* and share this literature with his comrades in the PCA. Moved by the similarities between Gramsci's early life in Turin and his native Córdoba, Aricó took particular interest in Gramsci's theory of "organic intellectuals," which posited that the proletariat's position as an emerging hegemonic class would produce intellectuals that were unified with it. These intellectuals would be intimately familiar with everyday life, and not perched in the ivory tower. Aricó interpreted this as a rebuttal to the Leninist revolutionary vanguard, which could only lead the working class from above. In this way, Aricó found himself increasingly at odds with the PCA, which insisted on its primacy as an organizing body, and its Leninism as the paradigmatic theoretical avenue for communism's realization. Aricó, however, was not alone in his dissent, and the PCA knew this – Hector Agosti, a member of the party's central committee, was deeply interested in Gramscian thought, and translated *The*

*Modern Prince* in the 1950s. Aricó wrote the prologue to this edition, which was published in 1957. In this sense, the founding of *Pasado y Presente* in 1963 was not the inception of an thrust for an "alternative" or "heterodox" Marxism within the PCA, but the culmination of an effort that had begun in earnest in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In this context, it is important to note that *Pasado y Presente*, according to Aricó, was never meant to be a rebellion against party leadership, but a call for dialogue, an opening up to theoretical revision, and the opportunity to build a different revolutionary political project. The Party's reaction, expulsion, left Aricó and his colleagues without their main audience, and they found themselves directed towards students, workers, and later guerrilla fighters. The publication was then equal parts an external search for new theory of society, a personal journey in search of a "political anchorage."

Along these lines, the magazine became a place for debate, and its concrete, external "anchorages" varied over the course of its four years and 9 volumes of publication. Always close with Cordovan unions, which exhibited a more radical spirit than other Peronist syndicates, *Pasado y Presente* frequently published in support of their strikes in the mid 1960s, and helped directly organize a strike in 1965.[23] They had a brief rendezvous with a Guevarist guerrilla group, the *Ejercito Guerrillero del Pueblo*, also in 1965, which was reflected in their 5th and 6th volumes, with articles about "Castrismo" and reflections on the Cuban revolutionary experience. Some other authors in the magazine were also inclined to support the Chinese revolution. In this eclectic hodgepodge of ideology, the sets of theories and critiques offered in *Pasado y Presente*

[23] Schmucler, Héctor, Mónica Gordillo, J. Sebastián Malecki, Biblioteca José María Aricó, and Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, eds. *El Obrerismo de Pasado y Presente: Documentos Para Un Dossier, No Publicado, Sobre Sitrac-Sitram*. 1. ed. La Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones Al Margen, 2009, 31-69

do not seem, to fit a specific political agenda, but rather a critical framework. I will argue that *Pasado y Presente* generates a conceptual scaffolding – one that employs ideas of democracy, openness, anti-authoritarianism, and ideological pluralism, as a means of solving fundamental social (and theoretical) contradictions in the path towards constructing a socialist society.

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Growing up and working around Córdoba was also crucial as a setting for Aricó's theoretical endeavors, as the city's rapid industrialization in the middle of the 20th century created a new class of workers, and a much larger city where labor organizations became pivotal institutions. Aricó's awareness of this context was visible from the very first pages of *Pasado y Presente*, where he wrote, "A magazine edited in Córdoba cannot be unaware of the profound transformation taking place in the city that tends to rapidly convert it into a modern industrial center of considerable economic importance."[24] Now Argentina's third largest city, Córdoba was once a sleepy provincial capital when the great depression hit Argentina in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The decline in agricultural prices accentuated the need for an industrial economy in Argentina's interior. Buenos Aires had drawn enormous crowds of Southern European migrant workers since the late 19th century, and had begun to develop as Argentina's sole industrial center. In this context, Córdoba was mainly an agricultural center with a largely professional, bourgeois population living in the city. As a response to the fall of agricultural commodity prices in the great depression, provincial governor Amadeo

[24] Aricó, José, and Martín Cortés. *José Aricó: dilemas del marxismo en América Latina, antología esencial*, 2017. http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/clacso/se/20171117024109/Antologia_Jose_Arico.pdf., 89, translation by the author, all translations by the author unless otherwise noted

Sabattini began a series of public works projects in fields such as road construction and hydroelectric development. These steps attracted many workers from Argentina's vast interior. Córdoba's industrial establishments doubled from 1935 to 1940, as did the industrial working-class population. These reforms were part of a larger global trend of government involvement in economic production and transformation.

As ideas of state-led economic development percolated throughout Latin America, and the entire world, Argentina was no exception. The state's involvement in economic life progressively grew throughout the 1940s, and became embodied by the charismatic leader Juan Domingo Perón, who rose through the military ranks to become secretary of labor in 1943, and eventually president in 1945. This "populist era" in Latin America could be characterized by governments that refused revolution in favor of corporatism and reform.[25] Governments, through protectionist economic policies to create national industries and the expansion of unionization, social welfare, and suffrage, were able to take partial or complete control of both the material and ideological reproduction of the labor force. This cemented popular support for Perónand other leaders like him among the working class, which presented an enormous obstacle for radical political organizations like the PCA that also hoped to find their base in industrial workers. As part of a larger system of accountabilities, Perón had brought the burgeoning classes of industrialization under the broad ideological umbrella of "Peronism." Industrialists who benefitted from protectionist policies, and workers who were able to get a job with decent wages and a union both found solace in the Peronist

[25] Vilas, Carlos M. "Latin American Populism: A Structural Approach." *Science & Society* 56, no. 4 (1992): 389–420.

mission. However, unlike the PCA, or even for Aricó, there was no room for revolution in Peronism, which remained fundamentally conservative. The role of the working class was static and corporatized. Much like Italian fascism's view of the working-class as a group that needed to be included in a national alliance, the state saw the working class as an exploitable body, both politically and economically. These industrialization policies, which aimed to keep working-class institutions loyal to the state, were at the heart of Córdoba's rapid changes. However, the process of industrialization in Córdoba created a particular setting where the hierarchical "rank-and-file" union structure was met with disdain.

As Peron's government undertook landmark reforms in the late 1940s, such as union recognition, the establishment of social security, and the repurchasing of Argentina's railroads from British firms, it also created a military operated industrial arm of the state – the Industrias Aeronauticas y Mecanicas del Estado (IAME). The IAME opened a plane motor factory in Cordoba in 1951, finding demand for heavy industrial goods in post-war Europe. The IAME motor factory in Córdoba was the first major industrial plant to settle there and was followed later in the 1950s by foreign firms, as Peron's industrialization strategy shifted from nationalized projects to deals with western capitalists. In 1953, the government negotiated a deal with Italian car manufacturer Fiat and American industrialist Henry J. Kaiser, which led to the opening of two new factories in Córdoba. Since the IAME factories were prohibited from unionizing as part of the military, these new factories provided not only an expansion of the industrial working-class, but an increasing need for labor organizations. Even after the military's coup of Perón in 1955, the civilian government elected in 1958 under Arturo Frondizi also made a deal with British motor manufacturer Perkins, and their

factory was opened in 1963. As this industrial boom changed the complexion of Cordoba's urban life, *Pasado y Presente* retained a link with the unions that formed around these firms. This relationship, while not always consistent and central to Aricó's theoretical aims, was a reflection of a wider social and political project – the synthesis of an "intellectual class" that was coterminous with the newly formed industrial working-class of Córdoba, and more broadly, Argentina. Aricó, however, did not find an audience akin to the Buenos Aires union bosses who were closely linked with the state. Instead, he found workplaces that were largely democratized, with elected union leaders making decisions collectively. James P. Brennan examines the structure of these unions in his work, *The Labor Wars in Córdoba*, and how leaders like Agustin Tosco protested the Peronist bureaucracy. The push for a democratic union, and by extension, a democratic workplace, paralleled the development of Aricó's "alternative Marxism," which sought not only the links between intellectuals and workers, the democratization of the factory, but also the expansion of these methods of resistance into a potential national revolution. This organic revolutionary coalition would eventually include guerrilla efforts like the aforementioned *Ejercito Guerrillero del Pueblo* and later, urban Peronist guerrillas such as the *Montoneros* in the early 1970s. This chaotic and radical urban context gave way to Aricó's opening editorial for *Pasado y Presente*, which consolidated him as both an ally of the student movement and the "left" Peronist working class, as well as a critical enemy of the Communist party.

The first edition of *Pasado y Presente* appeared in April of 1963. The magazine was founded by Aricó, and his colleagues Oscar Del Barco, Hector Schmucler, and Aníbal Arcondo. The opening editorial, also titled *Pasado y Presente*, was only authored by Aricó but cosigned and approved by the other founders. The piece serves to be read

as a manifesto around a number of themes internal to Marxism as a global movement, and its place in Argentina in the 1960s. Aricó not only called for self-reflection with respect to the hierarchical and authoritarian structures established in the "actually existing" socialist states, but a fundamental, abstract renewal of Marxism along pluralistic lines. This refoundation in terms of ideological pluralism also comes to be embodied by the magazine as a political medium. The magazine served a multifaceted purpose for Aricó. It was not only the medium through which he officially expressed himself separately from the Party line, but it also represented a concrete alternative to the political party. In breaking from party politics with a publication, Aricó no longer lied at the behest of superiors, or a bureaucracy. A magazine, more so than a political party, would not base its power in unified positions, but rather in exhibiting and overcoming contradiction. In this way, the magazine became an ideal manner of circumventing the Party's imposed barriers on ideological flexibility, and a means of expressing ideas on openness, democracy, and decentralization. The magazine could become not only a space for the expression of ideas, but a political tool capable of capturing and realizing the synthesis of an "organic intellectual" class that would foment the revolutionary will.

Aricó opens his piece with an argument concerning medium, generation, and history:

> "En la gestación de una revista de cultura siempre hay algo de designio histórico, de 'astucia de la razón.' Algo así como una fuerza inmanente que nos impulsa a plasmar cosas que roen nuestro interior y que tenemos urgente necesidad de objetivar. No es por ello desacertado buscar en las revistas el desarrollo del espíritu publico de un país, la formación, separación o unificación de sus capas de intelectuales. Puesto que, al margen de lo anecdótico, toda revista es siempre la expresión de un grupo de

> hombres que tiende a manifestar una voluntad compartida, un proceso de maduración semejante, una posición común frente a la realidad.[26]
>
> In the development of a cultural magazine there is always some historical design, some "cunning of reason." Some immanent force that impulses us to express things that gnaw our insides and that we feel an urgent need to objectify. Then it is not incorrect to look in magazines for the development of a nation's public spirit, of the formation, separation, or unification of its intellectual classes. Given that, on the margins of the anecdotal, every magazine is always the expression of a group of men that tends to manifest a shared will, a similar maturation process, a common position with respect to reality.

Aricó's quote gestures towards the magazine as a political method, one that cultivates a relationship to reality driven by truth. He places the magazine at the center of Argentine political-intellectual life because of its *must* "objectify" the author's deepest thought. His sense of urgency was clear, so much so that he imbued it with Heglian teleology. The truth "gnaws" at him like an immanent force, fulfilling the "historical design" synonymous with the Hegelian "cunning of reason." In considering the main audience of this editorial as the PCA, Aricó's emphasis on reality and truth could be easily seen as a dissenting opinion, where the party does not possess an obligation to the truth. The process of expressing a common position, of representing a shared will, did not belong to the PCA, but to the abstract category of "magazines." Occupying this position, Aricó imbues his medium with the responsibility of confronting reality and creating *political will* where the ruling class and the communist party had failed. In this sense, the intellectual's purpose is to illuminate and resolve contradictions, and thus to "critically elaborate what is, what has come to be," ultimately transforming "*crónica*" into "history." "*Crónica*" here being a synonym for "tale," or more aptly, "myth." In this

[26] Primera edición: Aricó, J. 1963 "Pasado y Presente" en *Pasado y Presente. Revista Trimestral de Ideología y Cultura* (Córdoba) Año I, N° 1: 1-17, abril-junio, p. 1. All translations by the author unless otherwise noted.

sense, Aricó sees himself as unearthing a truth in the past, which in turn remakes the present, of writing against official narratives and criticizing their relationship to reality.

In this way, *Pasado y Presente's* goal was to reconstruct reality alongside a new generation that ushered in a new set of challenges. For Aricó, these new challenges could not be met by the ruling class, and unless there was an enormous upheaval in the PCA, they would also fall short. The failure of these political forces was not due to their institutional or military strength, but their isolation from the reality of the new generation. The PCA, for Aricó, had lost its way in refusing to work with Peronists, denouncing the political movement as a "distraction" from working class struggle, terming it *naziperonismo*. Therein emerges the kernel of contradictions between past and present, *historia* and *crónica*, or concretely, political structures and working class. Aricó and the generation he identified with, by "applying historical materialism and incorporating the motivations of the present, will attempt to solder itself with a past that it does not repudiate in its totality but that it does not accept in the form in which it has been offered."[27] Again referencing the PCA's past with Peronism and the party's fictional narrative that the nation was on the brink of a communist revolution, Aricó also embeds a broad claim about the past's relationship with the present. Insofar as the past could perhaps be construed as a prologue, Aricó's at least partial repudiation of an official narrative constitutes a critical thrust that aims to reinterpret the past as a means of asserting a political project.

[27] Ibid. 2

This project, it bears repeating, was centered around the relationship between intellectuals and workers, and the perceived contradiction that existed between them, which Aricó saw actualized in the Leninist division between vanguard and working-class. This division, formalized in Leninist theory, had produced an unactionable split between workers and party that led to an impotent PCA. Aricó's desire to displace the agency of the party in creating revolutionary struggle also extends to history, where he claims, "History is not the field of inexorable laws, but rather the result of the actions by men in a permanent battle, in spite of being conditioned by the circumstances in which they find themselves."[28] In repudiating archetypical Marxist teleology, Aricó gives the potential for agency to the un-named, untapped "generation" of working people in Argentina who lack a political direction. It is only from this milieu that the *intellectual* struggle can begin, and through "capillary and even agonizing development, characterized by successive ruptures," turn the intellectual class into one that is allied with the proletariat. In using the image of blood rising from the inside to reach the surface, Aricó gestures towards the importance of intellectuals not as dirigists in the Leninist tradition, but as unified with the masses and emerging from them. The resolution, or navigation of the contradiction between intellectual and worker was refracted into a set of other social contradictions – notably that between theory and practice, or revolution and reform. Aricó detailed these as follows:

> "Difícil es superar la permanente polaridad entre ideología y ciencia, conocimiento histórico y metodología científica, totalidad y empirismo (o más concretamente revolución y reforma). En esencia, tales polaridades no son más que expresiones cristalizadas de una peligrosa escisión entre teoría y practica. Cuando consideramos a la teoría como "justificadora" de una practica política determinada, o a esta ultima como "ejemplificación" de una concepción general "ya terminada", no tenemos una

[28] Ibid, 3

> conciencia plena de que ambas posiciones son manifestaciones ideológicas de un distanciamiento real producido en la unidad intelectuales-masa, ya que en toda organización revolucionaria la perfecta identidad de *teoría* y *practica* siempre se plantea en el terreno de la coincidencia entre dirección y base, dirigentes y dirigidos, elites y masa, intelectuales y pueblo. (89)
>
> It is difficult to overcome the permanent polarity between ideology and science, historical knowledge and scientific methodology, totality and empiricism (or more concretely, revolution and reform). In essence, these polarities are nothing more than crystallized expressions of a dangerous rift between theory and practice. When we consider theory as a "justifier" of a determined political practice, or said political practice as an "exemplification" of a "settled" general concept, we do not realize that these positions are ideological manifestations of a real distance produced in the unity between intellectuals-masses, when in every revolutionary organization the perfect identity of *theory and practice* always plants itself in the coincidence between direction and base, dirigists and dirigized, elites and masses, intellectuals and people.[29]

In this quote, we can see how the intellectual-masses relationship can become a monad for a wider set of questions. The "dangerous" divide between theory and practice manifests a distance between the two that relies on fixed, preconceived notions, instead of adopting self-critical measures that allow this relationship to renew itself. This renewal means abandoning on the one hand the "totalizing" nature of certain theories, like the Marxist-Leninist vision, while also not subscribing entirely to the gradual "empiricism" of reform. While Aricó writes that it is difficult to "overcome" these polarities, that is precisely his mission in advancing a theory that brings seemingly opposed categories together and finding the "coincidence" between theory and practice as opposed to their bifurcation. The question of democracy and popular will also remains embedded in this set of conflicts. Aricó sees a dogma that relies on a group of "theorists" that dictates, and a group of workers that act along those theoretical precepts. Arguing for a set of abstract laws of revolutionary action only widens the

[29] Ibid, 9

distance between the acting and the acted upon and can be ameliorated by the "coincidence" between, or equality of "intellectuals and people." Also, in the background of this analysis is a critique of the political party, specifically the PCA, which Aricó begins to see as dependent on this "dangerous" division between theory and practice.

In this reading, the political party depends on a theoretical paradigm instituted from above, as opposed to a dynamic, organic relationship that unifies the "direction and the base." In this sense, the magazine becomes a concrete political alternative, a "center for the elaboration and diffusion of ideology, as well as the organic linkage between extensive nuclei of intellectuals, the magazine constitutes a 'cultural institution' of the first order and its importance is ever growing in modern society." As cultural and social change runs through the magazine, this importance not only becomes essential to the diffusion of ideas, but to the political organization of society. The "organic" nature of magazines, in this context, can be read as pluralistic, democtaic, open, and freeflowing – it accomplishes a role that the state and political parties never could, because their reliance on authority predicates them from being "organic" like a magazine. In this way, magazines become "integrative" centers like parties, but excel in unifying groups and people that were previously divided by structurally imposed categories. He wrote:

> Por su acción integradora de las funciones intelectuales, las revistas cumplen en la sociedad un papel semejante al del Estado o de los partidos políticos, aunque las diferencias de los partidos una permanente función elaboradora de "técnicas culturales". Y no siempre esta distinción ha sido suficientemente tenida en cuenta por las publicaciones que mantienen una directa vinculación con las organizaciones políticas. Pero las revistas pueden cumplir con esta verdadera acción de *organización de la cultura* solo en cuanto devienen centros de elaboración y homogeneización de la ideología de un bloque histórico en el que la vinculación entre elite y masa sea orgánica y raigal."

> Because of the integrative action of intellectual functions that magazines fulfill in society, a role similar to the state or political parties, even though the difference with parties is that they have a permanent function as elaborators of "cultural techniques." And this distinction has not always been accounted for by the publications that maintain a direct link with political organizations. But magazines can fulfill this real action as an *organization of culture* only insofar as they become centers of elaboration and homogenization of the ideology of a historical bloc in which the link between elites and masses is organic and relating to the root.[30]

In this paragraph, Aricó argues that the magazine supersedes the party in its ability to organize a political culture at a more basic, organic level. Social change runs directly through the magazine, which creates "organic" links between intellectuals and potentially with the rest of society. Moreover, the similarity between magazines and political parties lies in their "integrative" function, their ability to synthesize political positions and intellectual groups. However, the party is innately undynamic in this respect, having a "permanent function" in the elaboration of "technique," or the advancement of a specified form of political practice. Magazines, in turn, become points of unification, and "homogenization" of ideology as they simultaneously become focal points for the organic and "rootful" linkage between intellectuals and workers. It is important to note here that homogeneity should not be confused with dogma. Aricó sees the magazine as capable of crystallizing certain positions, but not as being unopen to revision and change of these positions. This parallels his argument on the political party's incompatibility with intellectuals as a class:

> Cuando el delicado sistema de relaciones comunicantes que constituye la estructura de un partido revolucionario se obtura, fundamentalmente a causa de las cristalizaciones dogmáticas, se escinde esa dialéctica unidad de base y dirección que permite al partido comportarse como un verdadero "intelectual colectivo."

[30] Ibid, 6, there is no single word translation for "raigal."

> When the delicate system of communicative relations that constitutes the structure of a revolutionary party splinters, fundamentally because of dogmatic formulations, the dialectic unity between base and direction that permitted the party to behave as a true "intellectual collective" shatters.[31]

The party then, cannot coalesce an intellectual collective because of its reliance on unquestioned authority. The emphasis on practice ("direction") that is informed by "dogmatic formulations" as opposed to an organically homogenized intellectual collective shatters the ability of the party to unify "base and direction." Aricó again sees the party as unable to reconcile the distance between base and direction, or theory and practice, because of its insistence on formulas and authority. In this way, a pluralization of mediums and of potential theories can facilitate a renewal in communism's ideological core. For Aricó, this meant changing the structural relationship between the party and the people they were meant to represent. In order for Marxism to concretely reach the working class in Argentina, Aricó believed there had to be a turn towards "humanist" or "anthropological" Marxism that centered the importance of the person. Following from his desire to reach the "root" of social relations by creating organic linkages between groups, the development of a social critique that deepens Marxism's concern for the alienated *individual* worker appears as a logical focalization of Aricó's political-theoretical program.[32] The magazine parallels the political party as the intellectual parallels the politician. The re-centering of the individual, as opposed to the party, the state, or the leader, then becomes the centerpiece of an abstract reconciliation; the *subject* emerges as the basis for a theoretical "update." This abstract "subject" becomes a synthesis between intellectual and worker, where Aricó does not see

[31] Ibid, 11
[32] Ibid, 12

a strict distinction between these categories. The only prerequisite is a degree of "consciousness," and so the worker can become an intellectual as well. In turn:

> "Convertido en "intelectual" lograr posesionarse de la totalidad histórica, se transforma en un dirigente, vale decir, en un especialista más un organizador de voluntades, un "político" en el más moderno sentido de la palabra. Recién entonces puede dar su mayor contribución como intelectual, la que en el fondo consiste en una permanente labor de "desalienación" de los hombres, en una acción constante y tenaz por ayudarles a descubrir las raíces sociales de los mitos que deforman sus conciencias."[33]
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> "turned into an "intellectual," he is able to grasp historical totality, he transforms into a leader, into a specialist as well as an organizer of wills, a "politician" in the most modern sense of the word. Thus he can make his biggest contribution as an intellectual, one that consists of a permanent effort towards the "disalienation" of men, in a constant and tenacious action to help them discover the social roots of the myths that deform their consciences."

The synthesis of these roles then becomes the epitome of an "Aricoian" resolution. Not only are intellectuals and workers united as a class, but first and foremost, the "specialist" himself becomes a "politician," "an intellectual," "an organizer of wills." And the agglomeration of these individuals into a class occurs through the "disalienation" of *individuals* who become acting, conscious subjects. In expanding the role of the "intellectual" to essentially all workers, Aricó further emphasizes the importance of the grass root connection between intellectuals and the proletariat. The magazine thus becomes the instrument to simultaneously foment revolutionary consciousness among the working class and to consolidate a set of intellectuals within the "framework of the ruling class of the future." These processes are concurrent as opposed to sequential. For these transformative experiences to occur, the goal should not be an ideological

[33] Ibid, 17

monolith which relies on dogma, but a medium that encourages self-criticism, dynamism, and requires lending an ear to dissenting voices, even from non-Marxists. Aricó wrote:

> "Pero además apelaremos a todos aquellos que desde diferentes puntos de vista se planteen las mismas exigencias, las mismas preocupaciones puesto que no deseamos que la orientación marxista de la mayor parte de los colaboradores de *Pasado y Presente* excluya la participación de estudiosos de otras tendencias. Porque necesitamos del diálogo, de la discusión franca destinada a esclarecer ideas, estamos dispuestos a mantener permanentemente abiertas las páginas de la revista a la confrontación de opiniones.
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> "…we will also call all of those who diagnose similar crises from different points of view…as we do not want the Marxist orientation, which most of the collaborators of *Pasado y Presente* adhere to, to exclude studies from other tendencies. Because we need dialogue and frank discussion in order to clarify ideas, we are willing to keep our pages permanently open to the confrontation of opinions."[34]

Evident from *Pasado y Presente*'s first pages, and Aricó's first theoretical assertions, was a move to abolish hierarchies and to allow room for a wide range of intellectual voices. In some sense, one might say that Aricó wished to "democratize" or "pluralize" the means of ideological production in Argentina's left in order to overcome the contradictions and distinctions that were suppressing the opportunity for fundamental change. This is not to say that Aricó saw institutional democracy as a means for reform or much less revolution, but rather that the move towards a "humanist Marxism," a Marxism that sought to abolish the distinction between theorizers and theorized, between governing and governed, and the bifurcation of theory and practice, was concerned with the role of the *demos* as a generative entity. The intellectuals would not shape the working class, but the other way around, and the emergence of a dynamic

[34] Ibid, 17-18

theory would come from magazines, workers, and the multiplicitous "organizations of culture" that would be coterminous with the "roots" of society, maintaining an organic relationship with workers and the masses.

Along these lines, Aricó begins to develop a dialogical structure focused on oppositions that constructed by bourgeois society, and often sustained by institutions like the PCA. The reconciliation of these categories becomes Aricó's theoretical and practical objective in the construction of a socialist society. In this sense, the "Pasado y Presente" editorial presents one of the best and earliest examples of this emergent framework. With this methodology, Aricó begins to challenge the ideological polarity of the Cold War by centering the "organicity" of the magazine as medium, and its potential relationship with the working class. Along these lines, the Cordovan setting becomes central to Aricó's thought, where the organization of workers and intellectuals was close enough that they could be construed as coterminous, or interchangeable categories.

The editorial represented a variegated and momentous occasion for not only Aricó, but the dissenting Argentine leftists as a whole. Aricó exhibited some various characteristics of the "New Left" in broad theoretical terms – the desire to move *beyond* class as a means of orchestrating a Marxist analysis of social relations, a pluralistic idea of the relationship between government and people, such that this distinction dissipates altogether, and a desire for ideological openness and democratization that could be read as a direct reaction to the dogmatic authoritarianism of the "Marxist-Leninist" variation.

Interestingly, Aricó did not believe that this editorial would lead to expulsion from the party. Preceding the initial publication of *Pasado y Presente*, Aricó's co-

founder Oscar Del Barco warned him that such an outcome was possible, only for Aricó to dismiss him and say, "this is within the party line."[35] Even though the PCA had promised funding for the magazine's first two issues, they not only immediately expulsed the founders, but made an active effort to keep *Pasado y Presente* off the streets of Córdoba. Furthermore, the dispute became a national issue in the PCA as Rodolfo Ghioldi, the longtime chairman of the party and hardline Soviet supporter, published an editorial disparaging the "young Cordovans" in the PCA's affiliated magazine, *Cuadernos de Cultura*. [36] Ghioldi took a specific aim at Aricó's usage of the category of "generation" as opposed to working class as an example of liberalism, anti-marxism, and in the same vein as "national-popular" leaders like Paz Estenssoro of Bolivia, or even Perón. Ghioldi ironically derides them as being elitists who are fooling the working class with smoke and mirrors. He accuses them of wanting to be "an intellectual bastion (elite) of the ignorant working classes (masses and society of masses)." Moreover, Ghioldi paints them as followers in the tradition of Estenssoro, who was an "academic like any other" that relied on the "illiteracy of the masses" to grant more power to university graduates, intellectuals, or as Ghioldi might put it – "elites."[37]

These characterizations help to shape Aricó as a sort of safe reformist that easily critiques the PCA but lends itself political agendas that could still be characterized as capitalist. Another of Ghioldi's major criticisms was in the usage of "generation" as a

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[35] Burgos, 69-71
[36] This magazine could not be accessed, but luckily, Aricó and his colleagues published some of Ghioldi's remarks in their 2nd edition, which serves as the source here.
[37] Grupo Editorial. 1963. "Nota Editorial." *Pasado y Presente*, December 1963, 2–3 edition. http://americalee.cedinci.org/portfolio-items/pasado-y-presente/., 237-238

method of differentiating people. He seems to fear that if this analysis is taken to its logical conclusion, it would dissipate Marxist class analysis and fit into a bourgeois framework. Ghioldi wrote:

> "But if we place generations above everything else, what is left of social classes? Ortega answers anthropologically: 'there are no social classes, but classes of men.' It appears, then, like on so many past occasions, that the Cordovan bourgeoisie has created [this generation] in order to leave their mark on them."[38]

Here, Ghioldi compares Aricó's analysis to that of Spanish liberal philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, and by extension ridicules Aricó's "anthropological" Marxist proposal. Ghioldi's mocking tone; however, was not enough to stop Aricó from continuing to publish. Aricó authored an editorial titled "Stalinism and the Responsibility of the Left," where he addressed the importance of the third world in the construction of a global revolution, the need for the USSR to drastically reform itself, and for the communists who had defended the Soviet Union so fervently during's Stalin's tenure to take responsibility for their positions.

This title and the piece were particularly significant because of the PCA's close relationship with the Soviet Union (Ghioldi in particular), and tepid attitude towards Nikita Kruschev's "destalinization" reforms in the 1950s. Published in early 1964, *Pasado y Presente*'s second edition constituted a global awareness that was less present in its first publication. They committed the bulk of their ink towards reprints of the Italian Communist Party's reactions to the 22nd congress of the CPSU from 1961.[39] This is notable because the PCI had earned a reputation as Europe's most "critical" or "alternative" communist party. Founded by Gramsci in the late 1910s and led by

[38] Ibid, 237
[39] Communist party of the Soviet Union

thinkers like Palmiro Togliatti in the 1950s, the PCI directed criticisms towards the USSR's political repression, and supported Kruschev's "destalinization" of Soviet society. Alternatively, this congress was also the last to be attended by the Chinese Communist Party, which saw the Kruschevian direction as a "social-imperialist" turn away from Stalin's legacy. In this way, Aricó inserted himself and his colleagues into a global conversation on the renewal of the left after Stalin, and after the war. This second editorial, while shorter, concretizes many of Aricó's concerns in the global movements of the time. He directs his attention towards Cuba and Algeria, and the role of theory in those movements, as well as the ability to rebuild a freer socialism in the Soviet Union, worker self-management, and the role of bureaucracy and the state.

Aricó, like many Latin American Marxists at the time, was excited by what had unfolded in Cuba in the late 1950s, with Fidel Castro coming to power through a popular revolution, overthrowing the US-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. In this vein, Aricó argues that the Cuban Revolution, along with the Algerian war for independence, represented concrete examples of why and how revolutionary theory had to redevelop itself to account for a new wave of global revolutions. He insists on the urgency of revolution in the third world, and the multiplicity of theoretical paths that it has opened up. Moreover, third world revolution becomes the heir to 1917, where the "anachronism" of "socialism in one country" and the formulas expounded by the Soviet Union must be overcome by a turn to local knowledge that grasps reality. Aricó wrote:

> "Tal el caso ayer de Cuba y hoy de la martirizada Argelia: procesos tan ricos, creativos, tan llenos de imprevisibles, de imponderables, que desborda los esquemas perfectamente lógicos y fundados en los que el hombre quisiera encerrarlos. Ahora es necesario compenetrarse de a indiscutible verdad de que el marxista debe tener en cuenta la vida misma, los hechos exactos de la realidad y no continuar aferrándose a la teoría de ayer, como toda teoría, únicamente traza en el mejor de los casos, lo

> fundamental, lo general, y solo de un modo aproximado abarca toda la complejidad de la vida. ¡Qué actuales aparecen estas palabras de Lenin, tan permanentemente olvidadas en los *hechos*!"
>
> Like the case of Cuba yesterday and today that of martyrized Algeria: Processes so rich, creative, full of unpredictability, of imponderables, that it derails the perfectly logical and grounded schemes that man would like to lock them into. Now it is necessary to familiarize ourselves with the indisputable truth that the Marxist must value like life itself, the facts of reality and to not continue clinging to yesterday's theory, which like all theory, only accounts for the best of cases, the fundamental, the general, and only a an approximation of the complexities of life. Look at how relevant Lenin's words appear to be, so permanently forgotten in the facts![40]

Aricó emphasizes the unpredictability of real revolution as a way of ridiculing members of the PCA, like Ghioldi, who insist on Lenin's omnipresent relevance without any critical reevaluation. Again, Aricó returns to the distance he percieves between practice and theory, only now giving it a concrete, global example that moves beyond the Argentine working class' relationship to Peronism and the PCA. Moreover, Aricó could have been pointing to these "third world" examples as much more relevant to Argentina's reality than the Soviet Union. In particular, these examples become paradigmatic to Aricó because they demonstrate, for him, examples of nations in a similar state of "underdevelopment" that have not relied (in his eyes) on a revolutionary vanguard and an illuminist strategy. He returns to the importance of the reality presented by the masses as opposed to established theoretical formulations by focalizing the Marxist concept of history on the individual. Aricó posited:

> "We live in an epoch of tumultuous creation of history, as millions and millions of me have lost faith in destiny, in the wheel of history, in the hidden forces of historical necessity, in ironclad and mechanical determinism and they begin to understand that this History that is so often spoken of is nothing but their work, and that they are the ones who create it every day, in every moment."[41]

[40] Ibid, 196
[41] Ibid

Marx's teleological theory of history draws its inevitability from the "hidden forces" or "mechanical determinism" that Aricó gestures towards here. However, Aricó sees this as misappropriated in Stalinism, and of becoming an ironclad facsimile of socialist ideology that degraded revolution, and displaced the importance of the worker in favor of national politics. In this way, Aricó's emphasis on the autonomy and *agency* of millions of men represents a departure from the "ironclad…determinism" that decenters the workers themselves, who create history not only as "millions" but in "every moment" as individuals. Here then, the synergy of intellectual and worker resurfaces, situating the worker's moment of consciousness – the realization of his ability to "create" History as a singular person – as a negation of the Stalinist primacy of the state.

Aricó goes on to argue how Stalinism has pacified the masses ad prevented people from breaking their "inert" states. In this way, the worker breaks free from the confines of "myths, fetishes, and idols" through the creation of history. This reconciliation between the myth and history again parallels that between the worker and the intellectual, where one becomes subsumed within the other; i.e. the myth is revealed to be historical, and the worker to be a conscious thinker.[42] Part of this revelation of myth must also constitute a rigorous self-criticism that remembers the "innocents and militant revolutionaries that died at the hands of those who claim to uphold the same things we defend to our deaths." In recognizing historical responsibility, as opposed to a mythical retelling of the past, Marxism could reform the Soviet model and take advantage of a watershed moment in social change. Aricó wrote:

[42] Ibid, 197

> "Discovering the defects of soviet society, of socialism in action, of the *only* concrete socialism, has meant for us the possibility of saving it from the utopic reign of myths and the chance to place it in history, in the world of men and their work." (198).[43]

Continuing his criticism of Soviet society and its failure to reckon with history, this again is of particular importance for Aricó because of the PCA's extremely tight relationship with the Soviet Union. In this way, a debate on soviet history becomes an ideological proving ground for his proposed reforms to revolutionary method, and an entry point for a wider discussion on the "problems and difficulties that socialist countries endure in the construction of a new society." Operating in the framework of duality, Aricó extends his earlier abstract framework towards a more concrete set of questions, and in turn foreshadows some of his later concerns in the 1980s. He wished to address:

> "…the link between building socialism and democratic development, central planning and the initiative and control of the working masses, the organization of the State and the forms of direct democracy characteristic of a socialist society, and many others…"[44]

Aricó presents a series of impasses that plague the global left to this day, which have become perpetual questions that delineate ideological affiliation and socio-political imagination. In memorial terms, these broad practical political questions have been construed as diametrical opposites. And yet, these categories appear less as insurmountable oppositions for Aricó, but more necessary questions to be bridged through an ideological and political pluralization of society along the lines of a transformed working class. In order to supersede the "violations of legality, stagnation, and degeneration…of the body social," Aricó complimented some Kruschevian reforms

[43] Ibid, 198.
[44] Ibid

that included "a reestablishment of socialist legality, economic decentralization, and forms of direct democracy such as comrade tribunals…reform of party statutes, and measures aimed at countering the bureaucratic structures of the state and the party."[45] Aricó also linked these reforms to a changing reality in the Soviet Union, an "industrial reconversion that left most workers in fields like electronics, nuclear technology, industrial chemistry, computing, which blur the distinction between "intellectual nad manual labor."[46] In this way, Aricó merges the intellectualization of the workforce with a democratization of the political sphere. He wrote of this "new force":

> "These new forces that fight for a full democratization, for an expansion of self-management, are composed fundamentally of the new social groups that have come about as a result of industrial reconversion in the USSR" (199).[47]

Along these lines, Aricó has constructed a theoretical framework that depends not only on the classic Marxist synergy of contradictions, but that employs pluralization, democratization, and self-management as the primary means of dialectical synthesis. Insofar as his framework is classically Marxian, it is also positioned against the two ideological poles defining the Cold War. In directing the vast majority of his criticism towards "actually existing" socialism, represented locally by the PCA, Aricó begins to denaturalize the ideological categories imposed by these structures.

In this vein, this chapter has utilized the intellectual historical archive of *Pasado y Presente* to show the emergence of a theoretical foundation. A foundation that begins with the magazine as a catalyst for ideological plurality, which in turn unifies the previously bifurcated roles of directors and base, intellectuals and masses, or governors

[45] Ibid, 198-199
[46] Ibid, 199-200
[47] Ibid, 199

and governed. This approach was also particularly tied to the local context of Córdoba, where the SiTrAc-SiTaM union at Fiat worked closely with *Pasado y Presente* in organizing their 1965 strike which called for a democratic trade union structure.[48] Through his writing, Aricó began to challenge the duality of Peronism and communism as liberatory paths for Argentine workers. This local dualism can be abstracted into the global context of the Cold War, which Aricó consciously undertakes in the second editorial examined here. Intellectuals and workers become roles fulfilled by the same groups, and Aricó wants to imagine a more democratic, less hierarchical future for communism on a global scale, but also amidst his own pursuits in the provincial capital.

After these first two editorials, Aricó published several more pieces in *Pasado y Presente*, including a critique of the PCA as a form of "orthodoxy," which was published alongside a translation of Hungarian theorist Gyorgy Luckac's "What is Orthodox Marxism?"[49] During 1965, the *Pasado y Presente* group also briefly flirted with the Guevarist guerrilla, the Ejercito Guerrillero del Pueblo (EGP), and published a volume focusing on "Castrismo" and its "long march" in Latin America, with Aricó publishing an editorial expressing his concerns with central planning in Cuba.[50] The rendezvous with the EGP continued only a few more months, but as the political situation in Córdoba and Argentina as a whole became more fraught, the political urgency of the period

[48] Schmucler, Héctor, Mónica Gordillo, J. Sebastián Malecki, Biblioteca José María Aricó, and Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, eds. *El Obrerismo de Pasado y Presente: Documentos Para Un Dossier, No Publicado, Sobre Sitrac-Sitram*. 1. ed. La Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones Al Margen, 2009. 31-69

[49] Aricó, José. "Examen de Conciencia." *Pasado y Presente*. March 1964, 4th edition. http://americalee.cedinci.org/portfolio-items/pasado-y-presente/, 241-266

[50] Aricó, José. "Problemas de la planificación económica en Cuba." *Pasado y Presente*. September 1964, 5 edition.

became more apparent. Inspired by the Cuban Revolution, and shut out of electoral life, Peronists and communists began armed movements. This created a complex situation for Aricó and other intellectuals, who expressed a critical support for the guerrillas, amidst their preoccupations.

In the face of the "armed experience," the abstract theoretical frameworks presented in the editorials above not only came to the fore but entrenched themselves in wider questions surrounding the "repoliticization of society" and the contradiction between myth and history. Simultaneously, while Aricó's theoretical pursuits become more abstract, the idea of division and rupture in his trajectory also stems from the radical, armed experience. Aricó's exile in Mexico and return to Argentina saw him construct a memory that displaced the 1960s and 70s, crafting an image of the archetypical young radical who becomes wiser and more moderate in old age. I will argue that this opposition, in many ways self-imposed by Aricó, can become another set of categories to be reconciled or dissolved by his theoretical framework.

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## Part II

## Memories of Revolution, 1973/1984: The Irredeemable Past and the Imaginable Future

*"The true picture of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again."*

*-Walter Benjamin*

*Pasado y Presente* was discontinued in August of 1965 after nine published editions. Speaking on the matter later in his life, Aricó claimed that the magazine had not been discontinued because of monetary concerns, but because it did not find the "political anchorage" the founders and authors were in search of. In light of this, the group began a separate publication, *Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente*, in 1968, as a less rigorous edition that included a wider range of translated works. In spite of only being in print for a couple of years and being shortly replaced by another endeavor, *Pasado y Presente*'s legacy has endured in large part due to the reflective work done by the founders themselves. Aricó and Oscar Del Barco both wrote extensively on the 1960s throughout their lives, with Aricó consistently undertaking reflective readings of himself. These memorial efforts span every genre of authorship he engaged in, from his semi-autobiographical monograph *La Cola del Diablo* and his chapter "The *Pasado y Presente* Experience," as well as recollections in interviews and his later editorial projects such as *Controversia* and *La Ciudad Futura*. These works have rightfully influenced any reading of *Pasado y Presente*, but some believe their influence has

established an irrefutable paradigm in the interpretation of the 1960s. Argentine philosopher Omar Acha, writing in 2014, remarked:

> Pero donde en lugar de morder el perro al hombre sucede lo contrario es cuando constatamos que a pesar de las divergencias políticas ostensibles y de las presunciones de originalidad académica, interpretaciones sucesivas permanezcan dentro del perímetro fijado por las lecturas inaugurales (239-240).[51]
>
> But in place of the dog biting the man, the opposite occurs when we observe that in spite of ostensible political divergences and presumptions of academic originality, interpretations remain within the frame established by inaugural readings.

Here, Acha uses an idiom in order to refer to how readings of *Pasado y Presente* have developed. Where one typically assumes the roles between "reader" and "text," Aricó's work flips this relationship around, where instead of the "dog biting the man" we have the man biting the dog, or the text *reading* the reader. Becoming an authority of his own intellectual trajectory has allowed Aricó to mark, often publicly, times when his thinking had changed, either reflectively in the past or in the moment of the declaration. In light of this, the approach of this chapter will be to examine Aricó's criticism of his own texts and his own thought as a complex memorial exercise; a practice of memory that reframes the contemporary as an informed departure from the bygone, while romanticizing the past and keeping it at an arms distance.

Beginning in a similar narrative tenor as the previous chapter, here I will begin with an examination of Aricó in his most "revolutionary" moment during 1973, when Perón's return from exile to Argentina brought increasingly violent political factions to a

[51] Acha, Omar. "Releer Pasado y Presente: ¿por qué, desde dónde y para qué?" *Prismas - Revista de Historia Intelectual*, no. 18 (June 2014): 239–42.

head and foreshadowed the violence of the military government only a few years later. Following this, I will examine some of Aricó's publications while exiled Mexico and the germinations of revolutionary memories, as well as reading of an interview he granted in 1984, after returning to Buenos Aires where he recalled the revolutionary experiences of the 1970s. Ultimately, I will conclude with one of his editorials from the late 1970s while still in exile in Mexico, where the dialogical framework from the first chapter begins to emerge as a continuity, and one that would inform his future editorial-political efforts in the 1980s. In some sense, this begins an application of Aricó's own synergetic methodology to his intellectual trajectory, where the violent, revolutionary past opposes the pacifist, democratic, reformist present, in a way that obscures the political theoretical frameworks of both epochs.

In abstract terms, this chapter also considers an interrogation of memory, or reflection, as a lens which can deepen preconstituted dualities, contradictions, and incompatibilities. Memory has become an essential mode of study for historians in recent years, particularly those who grapple with collective traumas inflicted in the 20th century.[52] As populations, authors, and nations remember the 20th century from the perspective of the "post-socialist" world, a certain nostalgia has emerged. In spite of this; however, Enzo Traverso has examined how the fall of the Berlin Wall entrenched a global, generational memory of socialism as an ideological project coterminous with totalitarianism and violence.

[52] See Lal, *African Socialism in Post-Colonial Tanzania* or Traverso's *Left-Wing Melancholia*. Other studies of memories and representations of violence in the twentieth century also emerge notably in French scholarship on WWI, see Cedric Marty's *A l'Assaut! La Baïonnette dans la Première Guerre Mondiale*

This is not to say that Aricó's memory perfectly parallels this structure, but that works of "historical memory" can provide a useful framework for interrogating the stakes and problematics of remembrance. Historian Steve J. Stern has continued this effort in his works concerning the memories of Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile. Stern's framework, which centers around a move beyond "The dialectic of memory versus forgetting," will be a helpful place to start thinking about memory in this chapter. Stern argues for a "study of contentious memory as a process of competing selective rememberances, ways of giving meaning to and drawing legitimacy from human experience."[53] By historicizing memory, one can then move away from dichotomies and towards a unifying historical-memorial narrative, rather than setting up an opposition between history as cold, factual, and true, versus memory as emotional, flawed, and imagined. For Aricó specifically, his remembrance of a revolutionary past is also tied up in the legacy of the Argentine dictatorship. Marguerite Feitlowitz wrote on remembrance and the dictatorship in 1999; how Argentina was left with an indelible mark of blood, "an impending sense of disaster, carnal knowledge of fear. A sense that history never moves on, but circles, raven-like, round and round."[54] Argentina's dictatorship was the violent conclusion of Peronism as a political movement, at least in its original iteration; more broadly, it was also the end of any revolutionary ideations on the part of the radical left. This national trauma has led to a displacement of Aricó's trajectory between the pre and post-dictatorship eras, where the thinking and mindset

[53] Stern, Steve J., and Steve J. Stern. *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London, 1998*. Latin America Otherwise, bk. 1. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004, p. xxvii

[54] Feitlowitz, Marguerite. *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

of the two become virtually irreconcilable, particularly in his own eyes. On a smaller scale, we will read Aricó's later work as a reading of his writing in the 1970s. By reading *Pasado y Presente*'s fervent 1973 editorials as a prelude to the 1984 interview where he discusses them, continuities between pre and post-dictatorship thinking can be established. This is not to say that Aricó's thought continued as it was, but that the dialogical approach of the 1960s remained, only now distanced from the historical moment that birthed it. In this vein, Aricó's revolutionary moment, when construed (by himself) as part of a traumatic past, becomes fossilized as a recallable object but not a revivable subject.

*

In 1965, after *Pasado y Presente* had been discontinued for the first time, Aricó wrote in an Italian magazine on the general question of *Peronism and the Problems of the Argentine Left*.[55] The article provides a historical overview of the PCA and the radical left's testy relationship with Peronism and its institutions. Then, Aricó argued for the potential for the Peronist movement to foment a revolutionary energy, not by merely "turning to the PCA," but by experiencing an internal rupture between students, workers, and intellectuals versus corporatized union leaders, the military, factory owners, and the state. Aricó also diagnosed how Perón himself had attempted to manage the splintering, by positioning himself as an ally to both sides, he funneled any official changes through himself. Moreover, since Perón was, at the end of the day, much more inclined to favor the national bourgeoisie over students and workers, Aricó

[55] Aricó, José. "El Peronismo y los problemas de la izquierda Argentina." In *José Aricó: dilemas del marxismo en América Latina, antología esencial*, edited by Martín Cortés, 101–15. Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2017. http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/clacso/se/20171117024109/Antologia_Jose_Arico.pdf.

believed that this internal schism could open up a "convergence" with the revolutionary left. He wrote:

> "*a.* que el peronismo se despedace y se diluya en las organizaciones ya existentes, vencido por el escepticismo y la desilusión, y termine así por integrarse al sistema; *b.* que encuentre nuevos canales y que, entonces, conservando su "alma" revolucionaria, se abra una vía hacia la convergencia con los sectores revolucionarios.
>
> *a*. Peronism disbands and dilutes into existing organizations, defeated by skepticism and disappointment, and ends by integrating itself into the system; *b.* It finds new channels, and thus, conserving its revolutionary "soul," opens a path towards a convergence with revolutionary sectors.[56]

Aricó is careful not to position Peronism itself as a revolutionary movement or ideology, but rather that its political situation in the 1960s encouraged an insurgent element that cradled a "revolutionary soul." The guerrilla insurgency tactics that came to characterize Peronism in the late 1960s and early 1970s; however, were born out of the context of the military government that took power in 1966. The democratically elected Arturo Illia had legalized the PJ's participation in local elections, such as provincial governments and mayorships. After a Peronist sweep in many areas of the country, Army general Juan Carlos Onganía organized a coup.[57]

The government attempted a liberalization of the economy immediately, coupled with socially conservative policies, profound repression of political speech, and increased violence towards working-class movements.[58] Onganía's junta ironically titled their political project "The Argentine Revolution," which included suspending the right to strike in 1967, assaulting universities with state police in events such as the "Night of

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[56] Ibid, 109
[57] Lewis, Paul H. *Guerrillas and Generals: The "Dirty War" in Argentina*. Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2002, 10
[58] O'Donnell, Guillermo A. *Bureaucratic authoritarianism: Argentina, 1966-1973, in comparative perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Long Batons," banning miniskirts, long hair, and abstract art.[59] These aggressively repressive policies not only emboldened the Peronist opposition, but also in some ways began to justify violence as a large-scale political method. Having been held out of national elections nearly 20 years, Peronists added guerrilla warfare to their political arsenal.[60] In 1969, after a steep drop in wages and political repression, Agustin Tosco, one of Córdoba's labor leaders, organized a general strike in the city, leading to a deployment of state police forces to Córdoba to restore order. A year after the May 1968 events in Paris, the uprising in Córdoba, which earned the name *Cordobazo*, became a rallying point for several of Argentina's emerging guerrillas.[61] As barricades were set up in Córdoba and Tosco called for a general strike, the military had to be sent in to crush the uprising, and suddenly, Peronism's "revolutionary soul" began to bubble to the surface.

Peronism's move towards guerrilla warfare also stands as part of the Cuban revolution's legacy. This method, born in the Sierra Maestra in eastern Cuba, was internationalized in the 1960s after the revolutionary victory. In 1966, the Cuban government hosted a conference on guerrilla warfare, and a number of Peronists attended, including those who would go on to form the Fuerzas Armadas Peronistas, Fuerzas Armadas Peronistas (FAP) and the Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP, Maoist).[62] As part of a continental movement against dictatorships, repression, neglect, and imperialism, guerrilla warfare became a viable, and popular, method of advancing political goals. Even Aricó and Portantiero, who were not necessarily explicit in their

[59] Ibid.
[60] Lewis, 2002, *Guerrillas and Generals*, 25
[61] Brennan, 1994, *The Labor Wars in Córdoba*
[62] Lewis, 2002, *Guerrilas and Generals*, 23-30

support of guerrilla warfare, were energized by the political context that allowed it to emerge. The class struggle was a battle, and if that meant inflicting death, there was a widespread belief that the price was worth it.

In a wealthy neighborhood in Buenos Aires in late 1969, two young men offered their services as bodyguards to General Pedro Aramburu, who had led the military government that toppled Perón in 1955.[63] However, these men were not bodyguards. They kidnapped Aramburu, who was taken to a secret location to "stand trial" for his crimes against Peronism in the 1950s. His judge, jury, and executioner was a previously unknown urban guerrilla group called the Montoneros. Named after the cavalry units from the Argentine war of independence in the early 19th century, the Montoneros believed that Perón could return from exile in Spain to build a "socialist fatherland" in Argentina. Their urban tactics allowed them to gain more appeal and support than most insurgent groups, uniting the FAR, FAP, and others under a single name. In the aftermath of their not-so-civil trial of Aramburu, the military government launched an enormous search for the Montoneros. The gendarmerie found and killed many of them within days of the kidnapping. However, the deaths of the revolutionaries were not met by popular celebration, but support, as thousands attended candlelit vigils in solidarity with the fallen guerrillas.[64]

For Aricó and his colleagues, the aftermath of the *Cordobazo* and the emergence of the Montoneros was evidence of Peronism's "revolutionary soul." The radical potential of a popular guerrilla resisting a widely detested military government had been

[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

demonstrated in Cuba only a decade prior, and the potential result of such a radical transformation in Argentina was riveting for Aricó. Along these lines, with the potential for a political anchorage in the Montoneros, Aricó revived *Pasado y Presente*. Aricó's attraction to the Montoneros fits the schema of uniting intellectuals and masses. While support for the Montoneros meant a tacit endorsement of political violence, for Aricó they went beyond adventurism, as evidenced by their popularity among students, middle class intellectuals, and workers. However, *Pasado y Presente*'s relationship with the Montoneros was not so straightforward, nor was Aricó's sheer endorsement of "revolution." While the post-dictatorship moment sees Aricó take responsibility for the violence of the 1970s, a return to the 1970s can show how the relationship between Aricó and the radical uprisings or guerrillas was complex; it was not full-throated support, just as it was not admonishment.

In the early 1970s, social tensions continued to rise in Argentina. After the uprisings in 1969 which began with the *Cordobazo* and had metastasized into the popularization of urban guerrillas, dictator Juan Carlos Onganía was forced to step down. His junta mate and fellow general Roberto Levingston stepped in, but only lasted nine months before being toppled by another military leader, General Alejandro Lanusse.[65] The instability at the top of the military regime was paralleled not only by widespread calls for elections, but for the inclusion of the Justicialist's and Perón's return from exile. Lanusse initially refused to cave to these demands, preferring to continue the ban on Peronists, which would allow for the UCR to likely win another

[65] Romero, Luis Alberto. *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*. Translated by James P Brennan. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013. 173-215

election. However, the UCR advocated for a more complete opening of democracy, and the PJ's inclusion. With Perón waiting to return from Spain, Lanusse blocked his ability to run for office in the upcoming elections. In order to circumvent this, Perón had his chosen personal delegate and left-wing Peronist politician, Héctor Cámpora, to run as a stand in. The goal was for Campora to win an election in March of 1973, to oversee Perón's return to Argentina, and then to hold elections again where Perón could win. With the campaign slogan "*Campora al gobierno, Perón al poder,"* the left-wing Peronist was able to unite conservative unionists, left-wing guerrillas, and even some former UCR leaders under the promise of Perón's return to "power."[66]

Campora won the election on the first round, avoiding a ballotage. However, his two month-presidency sowed more divisions in the Peronist movement, which was already showing its cracks. One of Campora's first actions as president was to pardon Montoneros and other guerrillas who had been captured under the military government.[67] The conservative trade union bureaucracy did not support Campora and had organized right-wing paramilitary death squads to go after and terrorize Montoneros and militant left-wing Peronists.[68] Upon Perón's return in June 1973 at Ezeiza airport, covert paramilitary snipers massacred hundreds of Montoneros and Peronist Youth. The bloodbath was hardly investigated, and effected Cámpora's resignation from power, paving the way for Perón's election in October of that year.[69]

[66] Campora in government, Perón in power"
[67] Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*. 190-195
[68] Ibid, 200-210
[69] Ibid.

The return of the *Pasado y Presente* series, which released two issues in 1973, narrated this tumultuous period. First, in June, and later in December, the magazine was re-released as a parallel to Cámpora's election in March, and then the rocky path to Perón's election in October. The decision to retake the banner of the original *Pasado y Presente*, as opposed to the *Cuadernos* that had been published since 1968, indicated the gravity of the situation, as well as its potential. Moreover, these magazines were concerned with the immediate, current events of Argentina in more urgent way than the first installment of *Pasado y Presente*. Translations of Gramsci still surfaced, but articles on the fate of the workers movement, the crisis of the Ezeiza massacre, and others were not interspersed with literary criticism and psychoanalysis. This return marked a new intervention, Aricó and his colleagues were situated in Buenos Aires, where the political churnings, massacres, and strikes of the Peronist state and insurgency were taking shape. They rung in the new series with a collective editorial, authored by "Pasado y Presente" and titled on the magazine's exterior as "the 25th of May of 1973," and on the magazine's interior as "The 'Long March' to Socialism in Argentina." The article's titles, in referencing Mao's 'long march' as well as May 25th, Argentina's Independence Day, evoke both a militant revolutionary aura as well as a national consciousness that does not let go of what is politically possible. The magazine also included a post-election endorsement of the "FREJULI" ticket led by Héctor Campora.[70] The editorial was collectively authored but reflected several "Aricoian" concerns with the perceived contradictions between politics and society, between myth and history, or between revolution and reform.

[70] Frente Justicialista de Liberación

The piece opens by declaring the inability of the established Peronist "national bourgeoisie" to meet the crisis at hand. Their "tenuous reformist anti-imperialism" this class embodied had been subdued by the involvement of "great capital."[71] In this vein, the primary struggle that emerges is that between the nation and "imperialist powers." At first glance, this appears to be a framework borrowed from Lenin's *State and Revolution*, and potentially drawn from other members of the editorial committee who contributed to this piece. However, the growing concern with imperialism was also not merely a product of other authors but had grown in some ways out of Aricó's own concerns. For example, he wrote a review of Claude Julien's *The American Empire* in 1968, where Aricó treated the American "empire" as a *way of life*, a mode of political-economic production imposed on the Global South.[72] In "The Long March," the editorial places this framework into a Gramscian vocabulary, with Argentina's burgeoning hegemonic class demanding "a socialist resolution to the Argentine crisis." This line was followed by a reference to Marx's early writings on the proletariat, and the importance of navigating an organic, gradualistic change in government.

The Marx referenced here comes from the *German Ideology*, where Marx described the proletariat as the only class capable of genuinely according its interests with the interests of society at large, by virtue of the fact that proletarians would be a majority. In this sense, the proletariat would be defined negatively, "a class in civil society which is not a class of civil society, a class which is the dissolution of all classes, a

[71] Pasado y Presente, (editorial). "Antes y después del 25 de mayo: La 'larga marcha' al socialismo en la Argentina." *Pasado y Presente*, June 1973, 7

[72] Aricó, José. "El Imperio Americano." *Los Libros*, September 1969. Articles box 1, folios 68. Biblioteca Aricó.

sphere of society which has a universal character because its sufferings are universal, and which does not claim a *particular redress* because the wrong which is done to it is not a *particular wrong* but a *wrong in general*."[73] The proletariat thus becomes the negation of civil society when it realizes itself as a conscious class, and inevitably, when it becomes numerous enough. This line of reasoning espouses a certain teleology in the development of a new ruling class, i.e. a revolution. In many ways, the editorial pushed back on this economic determinism, which offered an inflexible, and often unrealistic "timeline" for socialist development that was never realized. In their 1973 editorial, "Pasado y Presente" would write that revolution cannot be the mere result of "an inevitable tendency in the system towards economic collapse."[74] Simultaneously, a radical change realized by an organized "vanguard of the class" could be devastating.

The crisis with this latter "method" of revolution, which Aricó critized extensively in the first installment of *Pasado y Presente*, emerges again as a *bête-noire*. The editorial goes on to analyze how the potential consequences such a "substitutionist" group could have on the working class and the Argentine masses as a whole. Seemingly referencing the role of the Montoneros and the left-wing Peronists, or the Guevarist *Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo* (ERP), the editorial board wrote:

> "…una toma del poder que fuera el resultado de la acción de minorías iluminadas, que actúan en nombre, por cuenta, y sustituyendo a las masas, no podría estar en condiciones de resolver ninguno de los problemas históricos que legitiman una revolución en las condiciones específicas de aquellas sociedades. Hoy sabemos – y la crisis actual del socialismo nos lao está confirmando – que una "toma del poder" que

[73] Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Edited by Robert C. Tucker. 2d ed. New York: Norton, 1978, 64

[74] Pasado y Presente, (editorial). "Antes y después del 25 de mayo: La 'larga marcha' al socialismo en la Argentina." *Pasado y Presente*, June 1973, 7

> no esté acompañada de una adecuada toma de conciencia de las masas está destinada a frustrar las intenciones más profundas y liberadoras de la política revolucionaria, estimulando la aparición de un nuevo poder colocado por encima de las masas y tanto o más autoritario que el capitalista"
>
> "An assumption of power that is the result of enlightened minorities that act in name of, by account of, and substituting the masses, could not be in a position to resolve any of the historical problems that legitimate a revolution in the specific conditions of those societies. Today we know – and the current crisis of socialism is confirming this - that an "assumption of power" that is not accompanied by an adequate assumption of consciousness of the masses is destined to frustrate the most profound and liberating intentions of revolutionary politics; stimulating the creation of a new power, placed above the masses, which is at least or more authoritarian than the capitalist [power]."[75]

In these lines, with Argentina facing a moment that appeared as the closest it had ever been to a socialist revolution, *Pasado y Presente* urged not violent overthrow, but caution. This paragraph does not take account of much of the violence that was already occurring in this period but left the magazine steadfastly against any "assumption of power" that was not organic. This caution stemmed from the fear of the Montoneros' success without being united with the masses, which could replicate "the current crisis of socialism," where an authoritarian power could manifest that would be worse than capitalism. Subsequently, the establishment of working-class hegemony, and the "assumption of consciousness" referenced above come to be seen as longer processes that need to reconcile *contradictions of authority*. Aricó and *Pasado y Presente* then define what is "revolutionary" in their terms:

> "Una fuerza que aspire a la conquista del poder del Estado podrá legítimamente definirse como socialista y revolucionaria sólo si se plantea al mismo tiempo transformar la estructura misma del poder político, si se lucha desde un comienzo por crear las condiciones más favorables para que desaparezca la división entre gobernantes y gobernados."[76]

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[75] Pasado y Presente, (editorial). 1973. "Antes y después del 25 de mayo: La 'larga marcha' al socialismo en la Argentina." *Pasado y Presente*, June 1973, 8

[76] Ibid

> "A force that aspires to conquer the power of the state could legitimately define itself as socialist and revolutionary only if it aspires at the same time to transform the structure of political power, fighting from the beginning to create conditions most favorable for the disappearance of the division between governors and governed, directors and directed."

In this quote, one sees the closest that *Pasado y Presente* comes towards a definition of what is "revolutionary" in their eyes. Again, referencing the role of urban guerrillas that had garnered popular support, the editorial defines that which is revolutionary as reconciliatory, synergetic, or dialogical; a revolution does not create new authority, but restructures "political power" such that authority itself disappears, as does the opposition between categories like "governors and governed" or "directors and directed." In this sense, *Pasado y Presente* sees the Montoneros as a *potential* realization of their political project, a socialism that was mutually exclusive with authoritarianism.

Here, another iteration of the dialogical framework emerges; the potential reconciliation between "politics" and "society." The editorial argues that capitalist societies have made the political only a portion of reality, the "political role of subjects has scant relation to the social." Utilizing a Barthesian mode of analysis in examining the "mythological" and the "natural" elements of bourgeois society, the editorial claims that the "delegated democracy" of the west serves to mystify the undemocratic and authoritarian historical origins of bourgeois society. In this way, the "myth" of democracy "depoliticizes" society, allowing the practice of politics to remain uncontested, and for bourgeois democracy to appear as the natural state of things. This division bifurcates the "political" from the "social" and breeds apathy. In this vein, the editorial argues for the dispersion of political power among all people, equally, in a

direct democracy, as a means to realize the "revolutionary" communist goals of overcoming the contradiction between governors and governed, and having "politics and society coincide."[77] The editorial goes on to detail how socialist movements must begin in the factory, with individual workers "disalienating" over time, following from *Pasado y Presente*'s roots in Cordovan syndicalism. Thus, if they are to find success in the 'long march,' they cannot rely on the short, violent acts of a few small groups, but a gradual, structural political change in the relationship between authority and subject.

If Aricó had been centering the masses and universal political representation in the 1970s, why has his trajectory been divided into "revolutionary" and "democratizer" on either side of the Argentine military dictatorship? The literature (see introduction) has rarely examined the post-dictatorship or exilic moment in comparison with, or as a part of, Aricó's pre-exilic social imagination. This division, as previously mentioned, continues to exist because of how Aricó himself set the paradigm for reading his own work. The relationship Aricó sets up with his own past is melancholic, and ironically deepens the opposition between a revolutionary past and a post-traumatic reformist present. It is important to note that Aricó keeps this past close to him, while also making it precisely a part of the *past*, an experience not to be recalled. After *Pasado y Presente* stopped publishing its second run, there is a documentary silence for Aricó. While he continued to publish the *Cuadernos*, they are dispersed widely, and not readily accessible, and he kept no personal diaries. The political situation in Argentina deteriorated during Perón's presidency, with increasing levels of guerrilla violence from both the aforementioned left-wing fighters as well as their right-wing nationalist

[77] Ibid, 9

counterparts, which were often supported by the state. Perón died in July of 1974, officially serving for only months, and left the government in hands of his vice-president and wife, Isabelita. In what came to be seen as all but inevitable, the military ousted Isabelita's government in a coup in March of 1976. The coup sent thousands of Argentines, particularly middle-class intellectuals, fleeing. Aricó, like many others, fled to Mexico City with most of his cohort from *Pasado y Presente*'s second run, as well as some of his collaborators in the 1960s.

Aricó's move to Mexico is not well documented; his published works decrease significantly between 1973 and 1979, and he did not keep a diary. The only two publications available during this period were a polemic between himself and a member of the PCA's central committee appearing in the newspaper *La Opinion Cultural* in 1974, and a prologue to an edition of Ernesto Guevara's *El Socialismo y El Hombre Nuevo* appearing in October of 1977, after his arrival in Mexico.[78] The 1974 piece was titled "The Educator of the Masses," and featured a grainy photograph of Aricó, below which he discussed the theoretical importance of Gramsci to Latin American resistance, and the consciousness of the masses. The 1977 edition of Guevara was published as one of the first volumes in Aricó's *Biblioteca de Pensamiento Socialista*, a series he edited for Siglo XXI editores in Mexico City, which ran translations and new editions of various canonical Marxist works. In 1977, only a year removed from exile, after the bloody defeat of the left-wing guerrillas in Argentina, Aricó wrote the prologue for the first publication of the series. The publication of Che Guevara, the guerrilla fighter and

[78] The *Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente* continued to be published, but their accessibility is extremely limited, especially around the beginning of the dictatorship. Even his restored library at the University of Córdoba does not have a full collection.

thinker *par excellence*, at a when guerrillas were in the midst of grim defeats across Latin America, speaks to the moment Aricó saw himself in. In the prologue, he gestures not only towards the devastation leveled on the Latin American left, but the defeatism he saw promulgating in Europe's communist parties. *El Che* becomes an iconic figure, the perpetual rebuttal to those who doubt socialism's potential for success. He wrote:

> Frente a la social-democratización que amenaza disgregar la esperanza socialista en el mundo y empantanarla en una *realpolitik* devoradora, el ejemplo del guerrillero heroico, del "compañero ministro", del internacionalista sin prejuicios ni chovinismos, del comunista integral, seguirá siendo por muchos años un patrimonio a defender.[79]
>
> Faced by the social-democratization that threatens to dissolve the hope for socialism and to bog it down in a devouring *realpolitik*, the example of the heroic guerilla warrior, of the "comrade minister," of the internationalist without prejudice nor chauvinism, of the integral communist, will continue being a heritage to defend for many years.

Here, we see Aricó at his most nostalgic for the guerrilla, in spite of his somewhat tepid stance on it in 1973. The iconography of Che is situated opposite the sinister *realpolitik* of social-democracy, and yet, these words ring of past glory, of defeat. Aricó's use of the Spanish word *patrimonio* is particularly indicative of this nostalgia. "Patrimonio" can be applied to a variety of spheres, including national monuments and natural marvels that constitue the "heritage" of a nation. A heritage to be protected, to be recalled, or to be invoked, perhaps, but never resuscitated. The phrasing of the prologue, and the moment in which it appeared, amidst the despotic reign of dictatorships in Latin America as well as the conclusion of the French and Italian communist parties' rendezvous with the Soviet Union, imprints Aricó's writing with the haunting aura of defeat, anger, and

[79] *Antología,* 272

mourning. This early defeatism, anger, but also nostalgia towards the past laid the groundwork for some of Aricó's later forms of memory about the "revolutionary" moment. While our story will pick up again with Aricó writing in Mexico, his self-narration in an interview after his return in 1984 will provide a framework within which to situate the emergence of the democratic method.

Remembering the 1960s and 1970s in a 1984 interview with Carlos N. Suárez, Aricó would refer to the Montoneros as the final stop in his search for a "political anchorage" that began when *Pasado y Presente* was first established in 1963. Suarez himself was involved in the Montoneros resistance, albeit as a journalist. In this interview, Aricó narrates the purpose of *Pasado y Presente*, from its first edition, and wavers between a melancholic rapprochement with his younger self, and a harsher evaluation that distances the revolutionary past as a period of "dreaming with our eyes open," rather than remaining grounded in political reality. Súarez opened by asking him about the magazine as a whole, and its relationship to the communist party. Aricó responded wistfully:

> "Si antes habíamos entrevisto la posibilidad de renovar la tradición comunista manteniendo una relación contradictoria pero estrecha con el PCA, ahora no teníamos concretamente nadie a quien dirigirnos. Yo creo que la revista no logró resolver este problema…"
>
> "If before we had entertained the possibility of renovating the communist tradition in keeping a contradictory but limited relationship with the PCA, now we had nobody to concretely direct ourselves to. I believe the magazine never resolved this problem…"[80]

[80] Aricó, José M., and Horacio Crespo. *José Aricó entrevistas 1974-1991*. 1. ed. Córdoba, Argentina: Univ. Nacional de Córdoba, 2014, 70-71

This line of reasoning is interesting if only because it contradicts the political goals Aricó advanced in the 1960s. By addressing the importance of institutional support, Aricó seems to argue against the very notion of the magazine as a means of organizing political culture. Looking back on it as a *personal* experience, Aricó considers it to have been just as much an exercise for the editors and authors as the expression of a concrete ideological mission. Aricó went on:

> Toda la experiencia de la revista, tanto de su primera época como de la segunda, es en realidad un peregrinaje en búsqueda de un anclaje político y social concreto. Lo cual, visto desde el reverso de la medalla, significaba que desconfiábamos de la validez de la autonomía del trabajo intelectual al mismo tiempo que predicábamos defenderla"
>
> "The entire experience of the magazine, as much in the first period as the second, is really a pilgrimage in search of a concrete social and political anchorage. On the flip side of the coin, then, this means that we distrusted the validity of autonomous intellectual work at the same time that we were predicated to defend it."[81]

Here, Aricó began to almost dismiss *Pasado y Presente* as a mere stepping stone in a wider "pilgrimage," one that sought a less abstract, or "concrete," political project. Moreover, Aricó claims here the contradiction he established earlier between the magazine's *practical* political implications, and its *theoretical* significance for himself, and for others involved in the publication. In claiming this internal conflict, Aricó hints at the difficulty of navigating militancy and intellectualism without any form of ideologically based institutional support. Thus, Aricó seems to remember the 1960s as a period of noncommittal, fleeting political engagements that left him without a material form of political action that he was sincerely invested in.

[81] Ibid, 71

At the same time, however, he still considered his political goals from the 1960s as a constant. When questioned on the specifics of the intellectual pilgrimage, Aricó claimed that its goal was to find something that would create "the fusion between intellectuals and the masses, between intellectuals and nation-people."[82] With this political goal, it seems as if Aricó claims that every potential "anchorage" had to meet a set of criteria, even if this criteria was reflectively constructed. In the background of this search was also a radical "understanding" of Peronism that was more synergetic than the PCA. Aricó was interested in Peronism and Peronists for their potential to germinate the union of intellectuals and masses. In this sense, the polarized politic *Pasado y Presente* had to navigate was characterized by what Aricó calls the "Peronist-antiperonist" dialectic (which parallels the intellectual-masses dialectic), one that was never reconciled and in his eyes was conducive to civil war. He asserted:

> "La inexistencia de una mediación "democrática" y la practica ruptura de toda posibilidad de fusión mientras permanecería la dialéctica peronismo-antiperonismo, conducía a una suerte de guerra civil encubierta de la que todos éramos partícipes. Había que cambiar, erosionar, o destruir esa dialéctica perversa. Esta era nuestra verdad. No solo la de la corriente *Pasado y Presente*, sino la de toda la nueva izquierda que brota del *impasse* a que había conducido la Libertadora."[83]
>
> "The lack of a democratic mediation and the practical rupture of all possibility of fusion while the "Peronism-antiperonism" dialectic persisted, was conducive to the destiny of a covert civil war in which we were all participants. We had to change, erode, or destroy that perverse dialectic. This was our truth. Not only in the current of *Pasado y Presente*, but the entire new left that was born out of the impasse that the Liberator had led us to"

In this quote, Aricó again reframes the entire experience of *Pasado y Presente* as not only the search for a "political anchorage" and the unity of intellectuals and masses, but

[82] Ibid, 72
[83] Ibid, 73

also one that was committed to reconciling or overcoming the conflictive political energies that encapsulated the vast majority of Argentine political life. Moreover, Aricó claims that the primary reason for this failure was the lack of a "democratic" mediation, presumably between intellectuals and masses, or between Peronists themselves. In this way, Aricó himself begins to retrospectively construct a theory of democracy, pluralism, and organicity at the same time that he *personally* claims the violence of this period ("we were all participants"). As a parallel to injecting the idea of "democracy," Aricó also paints the "revolutionary" projects he undertook or was linked with as misguided youthful endeavors. Aricó described the *Ejercito Guerrillero del Pueblo* as an "irrational obsession," the classist unions at Fiat were granted an "exaggerated revolutionary potential;" both predicated to fail because of a dearth of "democratic mediation."[84] Aricó distills a portrait of his previous political allegiances as revolutionary efforts that he once believed could be vehicles of radical change, but only as a result of irrational, misguided ideas. This paints the 1960s as much more fervent and urgent than the theoretical and practical stakes he set out in *Pasado y Presente*'s first volumes. The question of "democratic mediation" was lingering for Aricó from the first pages he published, and by distancing the past as youthful and the democratic present as mature, Aricó is able to imbue his future discourses on democracy with an aura of renovation and self-revision that serves to craft a more compelling argument for similar sociopolitical goals.

In another vein, however, it also serves Aricó to not present himself as completely cut off from his own past. When Suarez asks him about the role of *Pasado y Presente*

[84] Ibid, 73

and their relationship with the Montoneros in the 1970s, Aricó rightfully claims the critical approach he had taken in 1973. He spoke:

> "Criticábamos el rol sustitucionista con que Montoneros pretendía resolver un conflicto en torno a la dirección del movimiento que requería de un complejo proceso de conquista hegemónica."
>
> "We criticized the substitutionist role with which Montoneros pretended to resolve a conflict contrary to the direction of the movement, which required a complex process of hegemonic conquest."[85]

Here, Aricó takes up a similar line of argument in comparison to the caution he implored in May of 1973. He repeats the idea of "complex hegemonic conquest," a protracted struggle that involved a transformation of political structures. This critique implicitly touched on the Montoneros violent methods that constituted for Aricó an attempt at an "assumption of power" as opposed to the construction of a revolutionary consciousness. Recalling the moment, he claimed that armed action was a "burden" to be abandoned as opposed to a concrete way forward for the Montoneros.[86] Aricó then constructs a continuous portrait of the moment, where he and his colleagues provided a level of critical support for the guerrillas. Then remembering the events of late 1973, when Aricó and his colleagues published their second volume of *Pasado y Presente*'s new series, he becomes the most remorseful. The 2nd edition included an endorsement of Mario Firmenich, a leader of the Montoneros, but offered a similar cautionary approach towards armed resistance. However, in his memory of this issue, Aricó nearly *apologizes* for the publication:

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[85] *Entrevistas 1974-1991*. Aricó, José, and Horacio Crespo, 76

[86] Ibid.

> "Recordemos que el último número de la revista aparece en diciembre de 1973, es decir, cuando comienza a agudizarse la situación pero aún ni ha adquirido la extrema gravedad de los años posteriores. Confieso, con la mano en el corazón, que nunca imaginamos las dimensiones que podía llegar a adquirir la situación. Hablamos retóricamente de la tragedia argentina, pero no creíamos que estaba tan cerca de nuestras narices."[87]
>
> Let us remember that the last volume of the magazine came out in December of 1973, that is, when things begin to intensify but the situation has not yet acquired the gravity of later years. I confess, with my hand on my heart, that we never imagined how the situation could unfold. We speak rhetorically of the argentine tragedy, but we did not believe that it was right under our noses.

While Aricó and his colleagues did not warn of the dangers of a potential defeat, they did warn of the potential for violence, and what that could mean for the left-Peronist movement. In this sense, Aricó is not apologizing for how he developed his thinking, but rather for not being able to see beyond the possibilities offered by the Montoneros, and of not being able to foresee the "Argentine tragedy." And even then, he essentially retracts his apology, by claiming that *nobody* anticipated the bloodbath of the dictatorship and state terror. The final stop in *Pasado y Presente*'s intellectual-political pilgrimage left Aricó wavering between tones of responsibility and melancholy. He claimed:

> No lo vimos nosotros, pero tampoco lo vio esta sociedad…Es claro que los signos premonitorios ya habían aparecido. Desde años antes se había instalado en la vida política Argentina el terrorismo como forma de lucha para aniquilar el adversario.[88]
>
> "We didn't see it, but this society did not see it either...It's clear now that foreboding signs had already appeared, for years terrorism had installed itself in political life in Argentina as a way of annihilating the adversary."

In this way, Aricó's endorsement of violence becomes a product of the time, a moment when, because of a lack of "a democratic government and the constant abuse of power

[87] Ibid, 76-77
[88] Ibid, 77

by the armed forces," armed resistance was acceptable as a *response* to state and paramilitary violence. But Aricó continues to affirms that he did not have a concrete grasp of the situation's potential consequences, even if the editorials from those years indicate a degree of caution, and an endorsement of pluralistic, democratic methods that favored a gradualist approach. The stereotype of the young revolutionary who becomes a melancholic reformist in old age seems spoken into existence here, when Aricó describes his attitude as "unjustifiable today." And yet, immediately after distancing himself from his own past in this way, Aricó claims he never fashioned himself a vanguardist, a revolutionary in the mountains like Guevara who sought politics in the barrel of a gun. He recalled how "[*Pasado y Presente]* felt ourselves to be interpreters of something occurring in society and not prophets of a new world."[89] Described in this way, Aricó imagines himself not as ideologue, a revolutionary, or a militant, but an intellectual. Someone who does not make decisive interventions, who does not wield institutional power, but an observer and interpreter of social realities. This portrait serves to both lighten Aricó's political commitments in the 1960s and 70s, while at the same time historicizing them. Now, I will turn back to his exile in Mexico, and how his life and thought there deepened the modes of critique developed in *Pasado y Presente*; simultaneously, this period sees Aricó develop a politic that nominally contradicts the project he set forth in the 1960s.

Aricó began to reconsider his own political prescriptions in the 1970s amidst his exile. The intellectual momentum that begins to build in Mexico centers around the establishment of democratic governance in Argentina and the end of armed conflict.

[89] Ibid, 78.

This shift constituted a reformulation of the democratic relationship and the dialogical framework Aricó had advocated for in the editions of *Pasado y Presente*. Where Aricó would characterize the 1960s and 1970s as a period of dreams, exile and the 1980s were a rude awakening; a period that necessitated an engagement with political reality beyond armed resistance and any of the "anchorages" Aricó believed he had discovered. In this way, exile became a context that directed Aricó towards reflection, and a more academic lifestyle. He edited a series of socialist classics at the Siglo XXI publishing house, was teaching classes at the UNAM on Latin American Marxism, was leading seminars at the social science institute FLACSO, as well as beginning work on his first historical monographs. This was coupled with a new magazine, *Controversia*, which was directed at the Argentine exile community, and towards a fruitful debate on the present, past, and future of the nation. This sedentary, more scholarly life paralleled his burgeoning concern with "democracy" in Latin America.

In searching for viable democratic paths, Aricó found himself turning to the past, and led him to write a manuscript titled, *La Hipotesis de Justo*, or "Justo's Hypothesis," on the history of Marxism as a movement in Latin America with a particular emphasis on the Argentine Socialist Party.[90] Aricó was not trained as a historian, and in this vein, his historical endeavors were inclined to examine the past with the purpose of extricating a plan for the present. He exchanged letters on the matter with historian Tulio Halperin Donghi, an Argentine exile from the 1966 dictatorship that was teaching at UC Berkeley, and they exchanged documents on agrarian reform in Argentina in the

[90] The manuscript was widely circulated among Argentines in Mexico city and other intellectuals, but was not published formally until 1999, eight years after Aricó's death.

1930s. Aricó had sent Halperín a copy of his *Justo* manuscript in 1982, and received largely positive feedback, although the historian was prone to pointing out discrepancies and offering corrections where he saw fit. One of Halperín's only abstract criticisms was concerned with how Aricó was writing about the past as a means of renovating his search for a Latin American Marxism, or for a democracy capable of effecting fundamental change in present day Argentina. Aricó underlined and starred several of Halperín's comments, but left an exclamation point next to only one, which appeared near the end of the three-page letter:

> Todo esto te muestra de nuevo por que mis reacciones son irrelevantes; me interesa mas la política que la ideología, y ~~que~~ tengo la maldita manía de historiador que consiste en creer que las cosas pasaron como pasaron por muy buenas razones y que la especulación con contrafactuales sirve sobre todo como un modo de entender mejor por que pasaron precisamente así, y no como una propuesta retrospectiva de caminos alternativos.
>
> All this shows you why my reactions are irrelevant; I'm more interested in politics than ideology, and I have the damned mania of a historian that consists in believing that things happened the way they did for very good reasons and that speculation with counterfactuals serves only as a way to better understand why things happened precisely this way, and not as a retrospective proposal of alternative paths.[91]

Aricó problematizes the distinction that Halperín sets up between politics and ideology in his historiographical method, which aims to search in history for paths forward through the present. Contrasted with Halperín's self-characterization, Aricó never possessed the "mania of a historian," but preferred a militant examination of the past which aimed to wrench it from dominant narratives and foster a renovation of ideology. Aricó's seminars at FLACSO also possessed a presentist tinge in their historical

[91] Halperín, Tulio, letter addressed to Aricó, José, March 17, 1982. Document box A05, folio 9f. Biblioteca Aricó, Córdoba, Argentina.

narratives. In a syllabus for a seminar on the history of the Argentine Socialist Party, Aricó always included the potential for a contemporary redemption, or reanimation of the socialist party as a force that could fill a gap in Argentine politics. This new political force, for Aricó , would not only be a redemption of the past, but a resolution of the division between "political and social democracy."[92]

As a continuation of the dialogical framework from *Pasado y Presente*, this historical approach coupled with the desire to unite politics and society through a democratic mediation. The politics-society dialogic emerges first in *Pasado y Presente*'s new series (1973) but continues through Aricó's work in the exile and return. One instance of this is in the publication of *Controversia*, which was realized together with Juan Carlos Portantiero and Jorge Tula. Portantiero he had known since the 1960s, collaborating with him from the very first edition of *Pasado y Presente*. Tula he first worked with in *Pasado y Presente*'s revival, although it is unclear if they met before then. The magazine's name, "Controversy," was apt. It was meant to open a conversation between the Peronist and communist sides of the Argentine exile, featuring heated discussions over the definition of human rights, what was to be done amidst the end of the dictatorship, the fate of democracy in Argentina, and the global "Crisis of Marxism."[93]

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[92] Aricó, José. "El socialismo en la Argentina," 1981. Document box A01, folio 9a. Biblioteca Aricó, Córdoba, Argentina.

[93] For more information on *Controversia*, see Matías Farias' scholarship, the magazine is also available at the following link http://americalee.cedinci.org/portfolio-items/controversia/. For more on the Argentine exile in Mexico, see Yankelevich, Pablo, *Ráfagas de un exilio* (2010).

In 1981, for the 9th volume of *Controversia*, Aricó published his first longform editorial with the magazine, titled "Ni Cinismo ni Utopía," or "Neither Cynicism nor Utopia." The title itself hints at the dualities that Aricó wished to navigate in this piece, but also those which he had navigated throughout his intellectual trajectory – between revolution and reform, between praxis and theory, and now in Mexico between socialism and democracy, or between politics and society. He wished to avoid the typical "cynicism" that pervaded Marxist thought on democracy, which merely saw it as a "bourgeois mask" for the oppressive nature of civil society. However, he also wishes to avoid the "utopia" envisioned by liberal democracy, where representative government leads to substantive reform. This piece represented Aricó's first incursion into discussing democracy in Latin America as an explicit political goal. While his earlier pieces had advanced democratic means for achieving socialist ends, he had not made claims about the structure of government, keeping his "democracy" contained to the workplace, and only suggested the broader consequences of this (i.e. the abolishment of governors and governed). In this sense, the push for a social democratic reality by Aricó and his colleagues constitutes another stop in the search for a "political anchorage." Part of Aricó's mission, in this context, is to reclaim democracy's association with socialism, as opposed to its pervasive attachment to capitalism and the United States.

A renewed democratic faith becomes a "passport" that allow Aricó and his colleagues to reincorporate themselves into a national debate, anticipating the end of the dictatorship.[94] Aricó begins from the standpoint of "recovering that tiniest bit of liberty that our rediscovered faith in democracy allows us to obtain from the banquet of

[94] Colleagues here being those who edited *Controversia*

the victors."[95] Writing from the perspective of defeat, he addresses his initial qualms with democracy, which he previously saw as a "bourgeois mask" that could be overcome by socialism. He then remembers the role democracy played for the PCA, and its usefulness as a rhetorical weapon to secure power in places where it may have been more difficult. He recalled how his PCA comrades would "speak publicly of democracy and claim to base ourselves in its methods to build out proposals, institutions, and political action," but that "in the body of our theory, in our final objects, we [were] profoundly hierarchical and authoritarian."[96] Writing as a former member of the PCA, Aricó seems to claim that all appeals to democracy are in fact made to benefit the revolutionary vanguard, to "capture power" and in fact drag down democracy where it is politically expedient. This sets up the contradiction between socialism and democracy from the perspective of the left, where socialism appears to be democratic but "conceals an action that tends to annul [democracy] in the future."[97] Leninism and its cursed "slogans" like "the dictatorship of the proletariat" again emerge as a great theoretical fault.[98] But for Aricó, this was not the product of an inherent authoritarianism in socialists themselves as people, but to the awful question of "bread or democracy."[99] This dilemma allowed for communist parites to privilege "actually existing" socialist experiences and states while resiting criticism by pointing to the *material* gains this socialism had achieved. For Aricó, this was a "terrible *quid pro quo*" that actualized the

[95] Aricó, José. "Ni Cinismo Ni Utopía." In *José Aricó: dilemas del marxismo en América Latina, antología esencial*, edited by Martín Cortés, 569–79. Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2017, 569 http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/clacso/se/20171117024109/Antologia_Jose_Arico.pdf.

[96] Ibid, 570
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid, 573

bifurcation between socialism and democracy. Moreover, in suppressing dissenting opinion, communists would avoid a renovation within their theory or a reconciliation with their communist critics, like Aricó. In this way, the democratic potential of socialist societies breaks down in their inability to deal woth internal conflict, which manifests as an authoritarian sensibility.

This authoritarianism constitutes the death of socialism itself for Aricó, and the only reconciliation can be found through pluralism, critique, and dialogue. He wrote:

> "El socialismo recompone la dialecticidad de su relación con la democracia al incorporar al pluralismo (político, organizativo, ideológico, cultural, etc., etc.) como un valor propio, insuprimible, pero al hacerlo cuestiona radicalmente todas las experiencias socialistas concretas."
>
> Socialism recomposes the dialectic in its relationship with democracy by incorporating pluralism (politically, organizationally, ideologically, culturally, etc., etc.) as an inherent value, insupressable, but by doing this it radically questions all concrete socialist experiences.[100]

This call for ideological pluralism not only rings of *Pasado y Presente* but demonstrates how the democratic framework emerges from the critical dialogical framework of the 1960s. Furthermore, a profound interrogation of "concrete socialist experiences" has continuously been essential to Aricó's trajectory. Returning briefly to 1973 in order to illustrate the continuity, Aricó had articulated the contradiction between socialism and authoritarianism on similar grounds. As part of the collective editorial reviewed earlier in this chapter, the editorial board wrote:

> "Socialismo y autoritarismo son conceptos excluyentes, aunque todas las experiencias socialistas conocidas aparezcan de una u otra manera como "autoritarias." Por que lo

[100] Ibid, 573-574

> que está en cuestión en dichas sociedades es su socialismo, que significa más un rótulo que una realidad."[101]
>
> Socialism and authoritarianism are mutually exclusive concepts, even though all known socialist experiments appear in one way or another as "authoritarian." Because what is in question in these societies is their socialism, which is more of a label than a reality.

Along these lines, it appears that Aricó's "rupture" does not lie in the framework of his thought or his support for pluralistic democracy, but rather how this "rupture" was reflexively constructed in order to shift the audience and scope of his prescriptions. The consequences of this rupture, whether memorial or real, also appears in a change from the *negative* to the *positive*. Faced with an unending set of unsolved questions of how to navigate the governability of societies, Aricó proposes the debate around democracy as answer to the multifaceted questions of all societies, not only socialist ones. In this sense, Aricó proposes democracy as a positive solution, one that "eludes the run towards utopia," but also refuses to "cynically accept the existing."[102] In a "self-destructive" world made up of military dictatorships, plagued with state violence and imperial incursions, socialism can only replenish itself by enlisting the service of democracy. Aricó wrote on how the *world* required this:

> Pero siendo diverso, el ideal socialista se sostiene como tal solo a condición de admitir al método democrático como camino de su efectivización. Solo así el mundo incontenible de lo diverso y de lo complejo puede abrirse paso de una manera no negativa, sino positiva, como una nueva forma de vida moral y cultural de las masas.[103]
>
> Being diverse, the socialist ideal only sustains itself by admitting the democratic method as the path towards its effectivization. Only like this can the

[101] Pasado y Presente, "Antes y después del 25 de mayo: La 'larga marcha' al socialismo en la Argentina," 8
[102] Aricó, "Ni Cinismo ni Utopía." 574
[103] Ibid, 574-575

> uncontainable world of the diverse and the complex appear not negatively, but positively, as a new form of moral and cultural life of the masses.

In this quote, we see the how Aricó's democratic project cultivates a different audience. Where *Pasado y Presente* was intermittently directed at the communist party, guerrillas, as well as working class and student leaders, *Controversia* was directed primarily to the exile community and an international set of Latin American intellectuals residing in Mexico City. These groups were populated by well-educated, largely middle class, of either Peronist or socialist persuasions who were intent on finding avenues to rebuild their influence in Argentine politics.[104] In this way, Aricó's writing also shows a demonstrable change – it is no longer riddled with references to Marx, Gramsci, claims about the Soviet Union, and the direction of the global communist movement. Instead, he approaches a question that he believes is "not the mere result of the theoretical crisis of Marxism, but the acknowledgement of a radical crisis in the entire civilized world."[105] This crisis of Marxism required not a discussion of new "ideologisms" or on the difference between "formal" and "substantive" democracy, but rigorous self-criticism. Aricó diagnoses this crisis in general terms, along global lines, but concludes his editorial with a concrete proposal for Argentina to "democratize" in his eyes.

Again, the primary force that must facilitate democracy in Argentina becomes the Peronist movement. Aricó justifies this with a historical reference to the primary enemies of democracy in Argentina, "the land owners, the grand bourgeoisie,

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[104] Yankelevich, Pablo. *Ráfagas de un exilio: argentinos en México, 1974-1983*. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2010.

[105] Ibid, 575

imperialism, and state bureaucracy."[106] In order for a dissenting movement centered around democracy to take hold, Aricó believed that the Peronist trade unions would have to disaggregate themselves from the state structure, and "self-democratize." In constructing his criticism of unions, Aricó adopts a similar strategy to his critique of Leninism – where it is impossible, or very likely, that the "vanguard" group, the "directing" group, becomes corrupted and dependent on hierarchy and bureaucracy for the reproduction of the institution. This constituted Aricó's criticism of the Soviet bureaucratic state, as well as some of his concerns with the Montoneros, which were examined earlier in this chapter. Aricó asserts that the Peronist movement's fragmentation was not due to the guerrilla's violence, but by the insistence on a rank and file system imposed from Buenos Aires union bosses. In this way, even in what is historically a democratizing institution which gives voice to those who were previously unrepresented, the labor union, the weakness of democracy rears its ugly head. With a structure that relied on the negotiation of contracts by a small group of bosses that lived in Buenos Aires and were sometimes more tied to the state than to the individual workers they represented, the directing group frequently capitulated to state interests, treating salaries as an "independent variable."[107] To remake democracy in Argentina, again for Aricó, means to find the wisdom, the voice, and the will of the working class:

> "La crisis argentina está contribuyendo a mostrar que ya no es suficiente enfatizar el contenido democrático objetivo del movimiento obrero y de las organizaciones políticas y sociales populares, que para salir de la crisis del propio movimiento obrero de- muestra su capacidad de auto democratizarse hasta dónde puede llegar a ser una prefiguración de la nueva Argentina."
>
> "The Argentine crisis is continuing to show that it is no longer enough to emphasize the objective democratic soul of the workers movement and of popular

[106] Ibid. 576
[107] Ibid, 577

> social and political organizations, in order to find a way out of the crisis the very same workers movement must demonstrate its capacity to self-democratize until it can become a prefiguration of the new Argentina."[108]

In this respect, the idea of democratization reiterates into something internal to the worker's movement, again as a *method*. Aricó's assertion that a democratic transformation in Argentina must originate in the worker's movement again positions the proletariat as the transformative subject in society. However, we do not observe the transformation of the worker into an "intellectual" in the Gramscian tenor, nor do we observe the championing of outright struggle. Aricó curiously refers to the need to the worker's movement to "self-democratize," which appears as the pinnacle of his critique of vanguardism. And, while methodology, language, and approach continue to change and iterate in Aricó's thought, the subject remains relatively constant. Even in spite of passing his "revolutionary" or "militant" moment, Aricó's Marxism does not waiver, and his method, while channeled through more institutional means, still focuses on the liberation of the working class on the working class' own terms, down to the last person.

*

As Aricó added institutional democracy to his set of political ideas, he claimed that this was a departure from his thinking in the 1960s and 1970s. However, this chapter has argued there is the persistence of a dialogical framework that prioritizes dissent, openness, and lack of hierarchy. The following chapter will further detail Aricó's proximity to this political method, and how his employment of electoral democracy in the realization of socialism does not constitute an irreonciable intellectual rupture. In this context, this chapter has examined how memory served to create this division,

[108] Ibid, 578

crafting a (mis)understanding of the past along the lines of the contemporary. The role of memory in Aricó is best crystallized by Aricó's self-characterization as a *mere* intellectual. I emphasize this word because of his reflexive desire to imagine himself not as an "prophet of a new world," but an "interpreter." The imaginary potential of revolution becomes replaced by the grounded rationality of intellect. Aricó's interview in 1984 concedes the coincidence of "intellectual" and "revolutionary," because it crafts a mythical remembrance of what had been situated as "revolutionary." This chapter has argued that Aricó's self-reflection has recreated a generational and ideological division where one is not compelled to exist. This is not to say that enormous ruptures such as the dictatorship, exile, and state terrorism have no impact on his thinking; his setting was essential to the work he undertook and the theory he produced. Insofar as setting was essential to Aricó's work, these settings become reduced to "heritage" in his memorial work. Again, the past can be remembered, but only through the lens of melancholy, as a nostalgic tribute to a departed story. In this way, Aricó's memories make his past appear as a resolute and complete, while his present is in a process of continuous reimagination.

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## Part III

## Democracy, At Last: From Exile to Redemption

*"From this perspective nothing has ever been lost forever; whoever is prepared to blast open the continuum of history cannot accept a trivial belief in cultural progress."*

*-José Aricó, La Cola del Diablo*

Since Aricó's 1981 editorial, which was published in the midst of the dictatorship, the practice and institution of democracy in Argentina has earned the attention of scholars across disciplines. Difficulties surrounding democracy have often been viewed as a monad for the country's myriad political problems in the 20th century, and even to this day. Arguments stipulate that the lack of a democratic legacy in the 20th century has made the construction of reliable democratic institutions more difficult, with corruption and bribery remaining stalwarts of Argentina's political culture. Writing in 2005, political scientists Maria Victoria Murillo and Steven Levitsky addressed the "politics of institutional weakness in their edited volume on Argentine democracy.[109] After a bried historical overview, they examine the nature of democracy since its renovation in 1983; Murillo and Levitsky pinpoint the weakness of parallel institutions such as the supreme court, provincial governments, and "market-institutions" as some principal reasons why Argentina has been so "crisis prone" in spite of its strong federal democracy since 1983. In viewing democracy as an essential component of the policy-making process, Murillo and Levitsky position it as a political practice meant to grant the government legitimacy over its subjects. With the contemporary argentine democracy being characterized by a

[109] Levitsky, Steven, and María Victoria Murillo. "Introduction." In *Argentine Democracy: The Politics of Institutional Weakness*, 1–21. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005.

burdensome bureaucracy with little incentive to work, high turnover rates for policy makers, and thus a tendency to adopt "extreme" policy such as the monetary convertibility plan of the 1990s, it seems fair to question Argentine democracy not merely in nationwide elections and local outcomes, but in its theoretical essence.[110] Murillo and Levitsky do a meticulous job of showing how current institutions repeat the cycle of producing poor policy that seems disconnected from the masses they are supposed preside over. And yet, there was a moment when "Argentine Democracy" was not a manifested ideal type of dysfunctional South American corruption and institutional weakness, but a murky, unrealized political practice. Immediately after the collapse of the military dictatorship, the concept of "democracy" was malleable.

Perhaps nobody embodies the malleability of this democracy better than Aricó, who had begun to reinvent democracy along socialist lines. In particular, Aricó came to emphasize democracy as a "method" in order to build a socialist society. Upon his return to Argentina, Aricó was enthused by the newly elected democratic government, but strayed little from the socialist motivations and ideals that had driven his previous editorial work. Democracy and socialism were part and parcel of the same political mission and were inextricable from one another for Aricó. Examining this association, as part of a popular memory of socialism, can be puzzling. Democracy and socialism have often been seen as paradigmatic opposites in the post-Cold War political imagination. Intellectual historian Enzo Traverso examines how this association was made permanent by the collapse of the Berlin Wall:

> "The entire history of communism was reduced to its totalitarian dimension, which appeared as a collective, transmissible memory. Of course, this narrative was not

[110] Ibid, 45

> invented in 1989; it had existed since 1917, but now it became a shared historical consciousness, a dominant and uncontested representation of the past."[111]

This quote is not meant not meant to provide evidence that Argentina experienced anything resembling the Soviet revolutionary experience, or the brand of state socialism that followed; rather, that the history of socialist ideas, no matter its geography, have been reduced to its autocratic iteration without regard for the complexities that existed within the broadly construed ideological "left-wing." This polarity and connotation also existed during the Cold War but has become the "dominant and uncontested" narrative of the second half of the twentieth century. Complicating this narrative negatively has been the focus of a variety of scholars, who have gone to show how neoliberal or free-market ideas' enduring association with "freedom" relied on an ugly set of autocratic principles. David Harvey, Wendy Brown, and Philip Mirowsky have all contributed to a growing theoretical and historical literature describing how neoliberalism has relied on authoritarian governments that deploy coercive and repressive methods in the name of (economic) freedom. The positive counterpoint to this approach, the examination of socialism's association with democracy; however, has earned less attention. José Aricó's writings, and more broadly, the cadre of post-dictatorship Argentina (and Latin America) can add a new dimension to this historical retrospective.

For Aricó and his colleagues, democracy and socialism were coterminous, and not merely in the Leninist sense of "democratic centralism," but in a sincere support for a constitutional democracy and the protection of dissent. Where Aricó described the first twenty plus years of his political writing and militancy as the search for a "political

[111] Traverso, Enzo. *Left-Wing Melancholia: Marxism, History, and Memory*. New Directions in Critical Theory. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016. 2-3

anchorage," the return to Argentina saw him produce a set of writings that maintained a consistent message – the deepening of democracy and popular representation in all aspects of the Argentine political structure and economy. Aricó also enjoyed a more stable political situation and a network of support entrenched in this steadier milieu. He was "anchored" in the discussion forum he founded in 1984 called the *Club de Cultura Socialista*, which led him to another editorial project, *La Ciudad Futura*, which he founded in 1986 with the many of the same faces that collaborated with him in Mexico, and earlier for the second series of *Pasado y Presente*. The Club and the magazine went hand in hand as intellectual discussion spaces for socialists around the world. These projects went along with Aricó and Juan Carlos Portantiero's linkage with the Grupo Esmeralda cohort of intellectuals and policymakers that advised president Raúl Alfonsín. The magazine, together with the club and the association with the presidency created a period of political and intellectual stability where Aricó was at his most prolific, and at his most public. He granted the vast majority of his interviews in the 1980s, published several monographs during the period, and was able to support his longest running editorial project to date. This newfound prominence was; however, not necessarily detached from previous projects that had a more particular appeal.

Aricó's arguments in the 1980s were a continuation and further elaboration on his previous work. The dialogical framework established in the 1960s emerges again in the 1980s under a new set of political realities and precepts, continuously relying on ideological pluralism, workplace and union democracy, and "humane" socialism as paths to synergize the contradictions at the heart of the Marxism's crisis. Simultaneously, the intellectual developments of the 1980s constitute a shift in form. Aricó's medium of publication became more widely varied, and perhaps more directed

towards an academic audience. This shift in form paralleled new theoretical concerns emerging from a geopolitical context that refracted national loyalties and questioned the very nature of nation-states themselves. We can see this reflected in the "continentalization" of Aricó's thought and his interrogation of "Latin America" as a viable and useful political category. Aricó's experience in Mexico was also part of a wider episode of Latin American exile during the military dictatorships. Exiles were frequently middle-class intellectuals, and these geographical movements had a particular impact not only in the country to which they were expatriated, but also upon return to the home country. Luis Roniger, writing on South American exile, notes the importance of this collective experience to remembrance and political imagination:

> "[Exile] disconnects the displaced individuals from the life of the home society. As soon as they arrive in a host society, individuals displaced by the dictatorships begin to live in two time frames: one in which they physically move from the moment of their displacement, and the other that takes place in tandem with the inaccessible homeland left behind. Exiles and expatriates are caught between the present and the past as they attempt to reinterpret and reframe past events and frameworks in terms of new experiences."[112]

This framework offers a compelling lens through which to examine Aricó's return to the homeland, where he began to pursue a political program couched in a new memory of both the individual and the collective. Attempts to reinterpret his own past, notably the 1988 intellectual auto-biography *La Cola del Diablo*, were paired with examinations of Argnetine and Latin American socialist history. These parallel imaginative contexts of both the individual past and the collective reimagination served to reframe Aricó's writings in *La Ciudad Futura* as a redemption of lost socialist efforts from the past, as well as a recontextualization of his own work in his contemporary political reality. In

[112] Roniger, Luis. *Exile, Diaspora, and Return: Changing Cultural Landscapes in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017, 11

this sense, the context of exile becomes an analytical tool through which one can see Aricó reckoning with the present in the context of his past (in *La Cola del Diablo* and *La Ciudad Futura*), as well as the collective present of Argentine democracy within the historical context of Latin American Marxism (*La Hipotesis de Justo*). Emerging from this mileu, then, is an Aricó that still departs from similar theoretical precepts, but within a political world that demands reflection and revision, "…exile is a harbinger of reflexivity and change, both at the personal and at the collective level."[113]

After the publication of "Neither Cynicism nor Utopia," Aricó spent two more years in Mexico, where he continued to edit and work for Siglo XXI Editores.[114] When the Argentine dictatorship came to an end in 1983, amidst the Latin American debt crisis of the early 1980s, the failed military takeover of the Malvinas (Falkland Islands), and widespread calls for democracy as dictatorships crumbled across the continent, Aricó and thousands of other exiles made their return. The military's attempt to govern the country by force had left tens of thousands dead and missing. The trauma of the dictatorship and state terrorism was, in Aricó's words, the "genocide of a generation." [115] Emerging from the rubble of repression and exile were hundreds of intellectuals prepared to reimagine the nation, and to come to terms with the past. Beginning from the perspective of defeat, but also of cautious optimism, Aricó would return to argentina at the end of 1983, after Alfonsín's election. Aricó's return to Argentina would be characterized by his new series of political-editorial projects, couched in the experience

[113] Ibid.
[114] For more biographical information on Aricó, see Raul Burgos' *Los Gramscianos Argentinos*, Aricó's book *La Cola del Diablo*, or even the collected volume of interviews edited by Horacio Crespo. For more information on the Argentine exile, see Paolo Yankelevich's *Ráfagas de un Exilio*.
[115] Aricó, José M., and Horacio Crespo. *José Aricó entrevistas 1974-1991*. 1. ed. Córdoba, Argentina: Univ. Nacional de Córdoba, 2014, 75

of defeat, exile, and return; Aricó's advocacy for electoral democracy was part of reimagining his past, and was thus presented as a departure from *Pasado y Presente*'s skepticism towards constitutionalism, as well as a dramtic shift from his critical support for the Montoneros. Recalling the first chapter of this work, one can see how Aricó's concern with "democracy" has occupied a central place in his work, even if it was not articulated in explicitly institutional, national, or electoral terms. The democracy of *Pasado y Presente* took place on the factory floor and expressed itself through theory by converting workers into intellectuals and vice versa; it overcame fundamental contradictions and abolished hierarchical distinctions with a framework of dialogue, discussion, and ideological pluralism. In this chapter, I will close read and discuss the concept of democracy as Aricó came to (re)invent it in the 1980s, both in interviews and in *La Ciudad Futura*, hoping to show the continuities that exist between *Pasado y Presente*'s desire to abolish the roles of "governors" and "governed," and the "pluralism" of *La Ciudad Futura*.

In this sense, it is vital to examine the reflective work interviews do for Aricó's intellectual trajectory. As a medium where he is most prone towards remembrance, the interview constantly plays a memorial, as opposed to prescriptive role in for Aricó. In particular, his work in Argentina in the 1980s receives a fitting prelude in an interview he granted in April of 1983 while still in Mexico. He was interviewed by Horacio Crespo and Antonio Marimón, both Argentines, and both of whom collaborated with Aricó at different point . Crespo was present, if not affiliated with, *Pasado y Presente* and *Controversia*, and edited the collected volume of interviews where this conversation appears. Marimón only comes up as a published collaborator of Aricó's in the latter stages of his time with *La Ciudad Futura*, writing regularly with the magazine from

1988 until its conclusion in 2004. In the interview, titled "Latin America: The Destiny is Democracy," Aricó's reflection on *Pasado y Presente* and the 1960s plants his inaugural magazine much closer to the contemporary political tenor of *La Ciudad Futura*. Speaking in retrospect, Aricó described *Pasado y Presente* as an ideological intervention aiming towards "communication" in order to "close" or solve the dialectic between Marxism and modern culture. He remarked on how "the relationship between Marxism and modern culture was not something already defined and established, immutable. [116] In this sense, Aricó criticized the distance he perceived between the social reality and Marxist organizations in Argentina (i.e. the PCA), which presented Marxism as a body of truth. Along these lines, Aricó restated the argument he made of the PCA at the time – the party's poor theoretical diversity, and inability to confront opposing viewpoints without exclusionary measures, such as expulsion, was indicative of the contradiction between Marxism and "modern culture." Aricó then advocated for a system of "communicative mediums," one of which he established with *Pasado y Presente*. This dialectical relationship was toxic, and could only be resolved with "ideological pluralism:"

> A fin de que esta relación dialéctica instalada en la realidad no se cerrara, debía existir en nuestra opinión un pluralismo ideológico en el interior mismo de las organizaciones que se decían marxistas; solo de ese modo el marxismo podía medirse permanentemente con la realidad.
>
> Since this dialectical relationship that was installed in reality did not resolve itself, there should have been in our opinion, an ideological pluralism on the inside of those organizations that called themselves Marxist; only in this way could Marxism permanently measure itself with reality.[117]

[116] Aricó, José M., and Horacio Crespo. *José Aricó entrevistas 1974-1991*. 1. ed. Córdoba, Argentina: Univ. Nacional de Córdoba, 2014. 25
[117] Ibid.

This unresolved dialectic also carried into how Aricó viewed rhe historical relationship between Marxism in Latin America and the subcontinent's working classes. In this way, ideological pluralization, or democratization, gestures towards an attempted resolution of the "Aricoian" contradiction between Marxism and modern culture (in Latin America). This theoretical thrust towards democracy was perhaps best expressed as a magazine that organized with unions and students in the 1960s, but the framework emergent from it became transposed onto the institutional and participatory democracy of the 1980s. *Pasado y Presente* was best characterized by its aura of heterodoxy, and by the belief that a dynamic left-wing culture could only be realized through "discussion and free circulation of ideas."[118] Reflecting further on this experience, Aricó claimed, "Definitively…I would say that the *Pasado y Presente* group was, in essence, socialist, pluralist, and *democratic*" (emphasis mine).[119] Taken at a surface level, this statement appears to bring *Pasado y Presente* closer to Aricó's intellectual pursuits in the 1980s than any previous piece of evidence presented in this work. In this sense, the opposition between the young, radical energy of the 1960s and the reformist push of the 1980s lies in the dramatic shift in method for Aricó, where social democracy and parliamentary politics emerge as the primary tactics for realizing socialist change. However, I will argue that the dialogical framework that was so evident in *Pasado y Presente* not only reemerges in *La Ciudad Futura*, but also undergirds a political-theoretical project that speaks the language of fundamental change and operates from analogous theoretical precepts.

[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.

The reformist energy of *La Ciudad Futura* was evident from the very first ounce of ink spilled onto its pages. The first volume of the magazine included an editorial note authored by Aricó, Portantiero, and Jorge Tula, their associate from *Pasado y Presente*'s second run as well as *Controversia*. They wrote on the importance of founding a second Argentine republic through a rewriting of the constitution. This seemed to draw from the French tradition of refounding the republic, which had never occurred in the history of Argentina. In the second volume, Aricó wrote his first long piece for the publication, *"Una Oportunidad para Ponernos al Dia*," or "An Opportunity to Catch Up," where he rearticulates the argument for a constitutional remake.[120] He couches this in the need for a new political party that reanimated the spirit and popularity of Juan B. Justo's Argentine Socialist Party from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Aricó saw this as a period when there was a Marxist organization that retained a closer proximity to the masses than the PCA. The post-dictatorship moment had brought about a political climate where Argentina could be reimagined, especially after the waning of two of its most significant political forces in the mid 20th century, Peronism and the military. Aricó goes on to question the merits and possibilities of this constitutional convention, and it is important to note that the "Second Republic" becomes not a mere formality but a method to achieve far reaching, fundamental reforms. The "Second Republic" was an opportunity to not only remake the nation economically or politically, but at a *culturally* and *ideologically*. He wrote on the popular desire for a complete overhaul of politics and economy, and the lack of doubt over the "necessity of the conquest of a political order based in an advanced social democracy with broader forms of social and political

[120] La Ciudad Futura, (editorial). "El Primer Numero." *La Ciudad Futura*, August 1986.

participation, with a profound democratization of power and a major socialization of economic life." By phrasing these reforms in the context of consensus, Aricó is able to position his argument as one that reaches *further* than this, one that goes beyond the *need* for reform and into the political will required to realize it. In this vein, Aricó becomes more pessimistic, and diagnoses the absence of a "reformatory will":

> Porque no crea que exista en la sociedad, en sus instituciones representativas, en sus estamentos políticos y profesionales, en sus dimensiones ideológicas y culturales, el suficiente consenso, la necesaria voluntad reformadora, el perdurable compromiso político, que torne viables las reformas institucionales y estructurales que el país requiere para clausurar su inestabilidad política y restructurar su vida económica.[121]
>
> I do not believe that there exists in society, in its representative institutions, in its political and professional classes, in its ideological and cultural dimensions, the sufficient consensus, the necessary reformatory will, the lasting political compromise that makes possible the institutional and structural reforms that the country requires in order to end its political instability and restructure its economic life.

Here, Aricó operates in the context of ideological and cultural change, one that couches the ability to gain popular consent for reform in a similar frame as the ability to create foment revolution. In this way, *Pasado y Presente*'s basis as a political project and an institution of culture becomes refracted into a wider national context. The gap between political party and workers becomes metastasized into the distance between "politics" and "society," which becomes the largest obstacle to the galvanization of the "reformatory will." In order to resolve this problematic contradiction between people's needs and their will, or between and politics and society, Aricó also stipulates a redemption of the past, a rereading that tells a new story and escapes the histories that trap people into "rabidly endur[ing] what exists."[122]

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[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.

In this way, Aricó's push for reform is not predicated on constantly imagining the future, but on finding an urgency in the present. Aricó rebutted those who thought it was best to wait for a time of tranquility to create change, by retorting, "one assumes that 'tranquility' can be achieved *without change*."[123] In this sense, Aricó remained skeptical of the political status quo, and its insistence on stability. The mere return to democracy was not enough, there remained ground to gain with the concept was still malleable. As far as this democracy was young and shapeable, it was also fragile, and for Aricó, to consummate the democracy meant to expand it to all aspects of life. Aricó found himself in pursuit of a state and a political culture that "could respond to the complex forms of our current society and its demands for collective intervention that exceed the limitations and weaknesses of classic liberal constitutionalism."[124] Thus, change could not be born out of respect for institutions that demand tranquility as a prerequisite for reform, but instead by historicizing them, and fundamentally transforming them. Viewing institutions like the federal government, federal courts, provincial governments, etc. as unquestionable or as stable ground on which to construct the new "democracy" was dangerous for Aricó, and indicative of a more general crisis in Argentine politics. He wrote:

> "…colocar en un nivel derivado y secundario las formas jurídicas e institucionales de una sociedad no sólo es un error teórico, sino también el claro indicador de una situación social de neta separación entre estado y sociedad, entre sociedad política y sociedad civil, entre economía y política como diríamos quienes pensamos desde una tradición marxista…"[125]
>
> "…placing the juridical and institutional forms of a society on a derivative or secondary level is not only a theoretical error, but also the clear indicator of a

[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.

> social situation of distinct separation between state and society, between political society and civil society, between economy and politics as those of us who come from a Marxist tradition would say…"

In this passage, Aricó reflects on a series of distinctions he drew from Carl Schmitt's *Concept of the Political*; Siglo XXI published an edition of this work while he was in Mexico, and Aricó wrote the prologue to the edition in 1983. These distinctions and contradictions, such as "state and society" or "politics and civil society" were symptoms of a political authority that was not able to measure itself with reality. In this sense, the elected governments of Argentina were an "affront to popular sovereignty." These emerging contradictions and dialectics continue the dialogical framework established in the 1960s along similar lines. In *Pasado y Presente*, Aricó explored the contradiction between party and working class, or between "theory and practice, direction and base, dirigists and dirigized, elites and masses," or more broadly, between "ideology and science…totality and empiricism (or more concretely *revolution* and *reform*)[126]" (1963). Insofar as the Aricó inthe 1960s presented a critique of the communist party along pluralistic lines, the 1980s develop as an adjunct to this political itinerary where the politics/civil society distinction (and unification) can become an integral item. The paths towards overcoming these dualisms continuously manifests as the unification of categories which he sees as being in a false opposition, an opposition imposed by an authority which has lost its touch with reality. In this sense, the desire to unify the "intellectuals" and the "people" by "dealienating" every worker expands into the "repoliticization of society" Aricó advocated for in *Pasado y Presente*'s second edition

[126] *Pasado y Presente*, August 1963, 9

(1973).[127] Extrapolating further, Aricó's "second republic" appears to be an attempt at a resolution between the cleavbage of state and society, or as an opportunity to set up a future "coincidence" between the two.

While Aricó's audience was wider, more academic, and more international with *La Ciudad Futura*, he was still directing himself towards people who had made up Argentina's multifaceted left-wing movement. For example, Aricó, Portantiero, and Tula requested $24,000 of funding from the Italian Communist Party in 1990, citing their international readership and correspondence with several of the PCI's prominent members.[128] Although Aricó may not have had much faith in the PCA, he believed in the importance of having a socialist party that would comfortably engage in the constitutional democratic process. This was the beginning of Aricó's thrust towards abolishing the preconceived contradiction between socialism and democracy. However, this argument was directed towards other socialists and radicals who saw *democracy* as a mere formality to keeping the ruling class in power. As a way of courting this ideological pole, and attempting to incorporate it into his political project, Aricó criticized the left for abandoning democratic methods, and claims that nowhere did Marx intend to make "political action into a war of annihilation." [129] This criticism of political violence then becomes embedded into a reinterpretation of Marx, and gestures towards the need for a theoretical, ideological, and cultural shift on the left.

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[127] Pasado y Presente, (editorial). "Antes y después del 25 de mayo: La 'larga marcha' al socialismo en la Argentina." *Pasado y Presente*, June 1973.
[128] Aricó, José M., Juan Carlos Portantiero, Jorge Tula, and Julio Godia, August 6, 1990. Unfiled Box. Biblioteca Aricó. Addressed to the "International department of the Italian Communist Party."

[129] *Una Oportunidad*, 36.

Without the conscription of democracy into its political-theoretical arsenal, Aricó believed that the "vanguard" or "illuminist" trap would again rear its ugly head. The "theoretical update" Aricó had called for in the 1960s was still needed badly, "Socialist discourse cannot remain in a vacuum…it must be capable of claiming how it can apply itself today, in which places, in which ways, through which institutions," he wrote in 1986.[130] The "vacuum" here presumably refers to the historical debate over the viability of the Marxist-Leninist political project, and its revolutionary aspirations. Along these lines, Aricó preferred a more immediate, definitive form of action, "the only guarantee resides in the organized and institutional character of democracy because only in this way can we avoid that a vanguard, as enlightened as it may be, prevails over men and establishes a command and dominion of a new oligarchy."[131] Retrospectively, Leninism's persistence in Aricó's thought appears as a theoretical crutch – a historical example always ready to advance his anti-authoritarian arguments, even when the Leninist political project appeared to be on its last legs.[132] By positioning democracy as both the means to realize a socialist society based on "liberty and equality," while also setting it up as a rejection of vanguardism and its ideological variants (Leninism, Montoneros, etc.), Aricó begins to sketch out his unifying, or perhaps *redeeming* framework for socialism and democracy, which he detailed more completely in other pieces.

In this context, as well as the aforementioned importance of exile, Aricó published his most extensive piece in *La Ciudad Futura* in 1987, which was fittingly titled "Imagining Socialism in Argentina."[133] Aricó used a structure of theses to organize

[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] I may be succumbing to a bit of post-socialist melancholia here, but in 1986, the need for reform in the USSR
[133] Aricó, José. "Imaginar El Socialismo En La Argentina." *La Ciudad Futura*, Diciembre 1987.

his article, with each one becoming progressively longer and more abstract as the article went on. He also intentionally published the article on the 91st anniversary of the creation of the Argentine Socialist Party, as a gesture towards his position and the importance of the past to his political project. The importance Aricó ascribed to the ASP was not contained to this piece, with *La Hipotesis de Justo* being a set of historical essays centering around the party's founder. Aricó believed there was a vacuum left by the ASP that was yet to be filled, of a party that could serve as a "pole of aggregation" for the positions of the socialist movement. Aricó, again concerned with a distancing between politics and society, and between political actors and reality, opens his treatise:

> "La complejidad de las cuestiones planteadas por la sociedad actual y las demandas de construcción de una democracia social avanzada pueden cristalizar en una perspectiva coherente si existe una tendencia, o más bien un área socialista, capaz de confrontarse con la realidad, con los hechos concretos y cotidianos, de concebir a la sociedad, a los sujetos sociales y políticos, a las formas de la acción reformadora, **no de una manera ideológica**, sino política."[134]
>
> The complexity of questions posed by our current society and the requirements for the construction of an advanced social democracy can crystallize as a coherent perspective if there exists a tendency, or better a socialist area, capable of coming to face with reality, with concrete and daily facts, of conceiving of society, of political and social subjects, of forms of reformative action **not in an ideological manner** but a political one. (Emphasis his).

Here, Aricó begins to "crystallize" the importance of democracy as a method for unifying political action with political reality, and of creating a "socialist area" that can confront this reality on a daily basis. Aricó again invokes the division between politics and ideology, which was hinted at in his letters with historian Tulio Halperín Donghi, only now he seems to take the side of "politics." However, what it seems that the "political" in

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[134] Ibid, 8

this case becomes coterminous with the real, while the "ideological" remains the space occupied by the vanguard, the PCA, and others who rely exclusively on theory without connecting to reality, or to "politics." One prominent example becomes Aricó's insistence on moving beyond, or supplementing class analysis. He suggests the ineffectiveness of Marxist class analysis as a means of projecting the "inevitability" from which socialism derives some of its political luster. The class with a "historic destiny" (the proletariat) becomes an example of an "ideological" formulation that should be substituted for a "political" one. This continues a strand of thought he had begun in *Pasado y Presente*, where his desire to move beyond bifurcated class analysis and towards the idea of a "revolutionary generation" had earned the ire of PCA chairman Rodolfo Ghioldi. In this sense, the lost inevitability of socialism could be ascribed to its insistence on dogma. Only by measuring with reality, by incorporating class analysis into different frames, could socialism synthesize *theory* and *practice* effectively.

The source of theory and analysis again becomes the reality represented by the masses; a popular experience that generates a political project. A program emerging from this milieu would never be a "mere voluntarist imposition," and would have the ability to "become concrete." Presumably through a party that incorporates a wide set of politics, and engages with grass-roots struggles, theory would be subject to a collective understanding of reality, a "political imaginary of the people," such that profound reform can take shape."[135] The idea of the "political imaginary" sets up Aricó's derision for the "political project." He wrote, "The very notion of 'project" should be considered not in the totalizing way manner typically done by the left and which I believe to see in

[135] Ibid.

the Popular Socialist Party's formulations."[136] Here, Aricó portrays state socialist projects as "totalizing," leaving no political or ideological room to breathe. In this way, he prioritized the importance of a new direction based in criticism and concrete reform. Socialism had to become applicable on a daily basis, a "real movement that surpasses the existing state of things," not merely as a "statement of an ideal principle, but a critical orientation in conditions of developing concrete and non-totalizing projects of management and of reforming social reality."[137] Therein lies the agenda of Aricó's reformism, which stems from his perpetual critique of Leninism and its grand ideological aspirations. As he had done in the early 1970s when he critiqued the "substitutionist" role of the Montoneros, Aricó lumped in the "populist" approach to this line of analysis:

> Frente a la quiebra ideológica de una concepción estatizante de la vida nacional, que nutrió no solo a la cultura política del populismo sino también a la izquierda, no creo que se pueda enfrentar con éxito a la presión ideológica y política de una derecha en expansión sin un campo de experimentación teórica y política de la izquierda socialista (8-9).[138]
>
> Confronted by the ideological bankruptcy of a state-driven conception of national life, which fueled not only populism's political culture but also that of the left, I do not believe that we can successfully confront the ideological and political pressure of an expanding right wing without a space for political and theoretical experimentation on the socialist left.

Insofar as Aricó saw "state-driven" communism as a broken ideology, he also accompanied this by critiquing national-popular movements like Peronism in the same way. There was an imminent need for a change in the "political culture" that drove responsibilities through the state and created a separation between "state and society."

[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid, 8-9

While Aricó directs himself to a largely Argentine audience, he also knows that he has readers abroad, and considers himself as part of a global movement. He notes the difficulty that French, Spanish, and Italian communist parties have had with concocting or readapting theories to fit a contemporary capitalist society whose composition has shifted dramatically as the state has engaged social aid and economic redistribution. Abstractly, this leads Aricó again to question the usefulness of the "working class" as a lens through which to engage politics.

Aricó drew this skepticism from Argentina's changing social fabric in the 1980s, a pattern which would be reproduced widely in the West. He almost prophetically addresses the emergent phenomenon of deindustrialization that Argentina has suffered since the end of the dictatorship, as primary commodities like soy have become of greater importance than manufacturing consumer durables for national markets.[139] Aricó wrote, "there are profound metamorphoses in the social and cultural fabric that blur the very profile of a social class that, like the working class, was the substantive base for leftist organizations, understood broadly."[140] In light of this change, Aricó suggested a movement organized around broader politics which incorporate class struggle, but do not depend solely on it. Aricó reiterated:

> No es que desaparezcan los trabajadores, sino que ha dejado de tener sentido la afirmación teórica, sobre la que se fundó toda la estrategia política de los partidos de movimiento obrero, de la clase obrera como la única productora real de riqueza social y de plusvalor, esto es, de la clase obrera como la única 'clase general' de toda la sociedad.[141]

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[139] Eduardo M. Basualdo, "The Legacy of the Dictatorshp: The New Pattern of Capital Accumulation, Deindustrialization, and the Decline of the Working Class," 2015, in The Economic Accomplices to the Argentine Dictatorship: Outstanding Debts, ed. Horacio Verbitsky and Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, trans. Laura Perez Carrara (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016),
[140] *Imaginar el Socialismo*, 9
[141] Ibid.

> It is not that workers are disappearing, but that the theoretical affirmation on which the entire political strategy of working-class parties was founded has ceased to make sense. That affirmation of the working class as the only producer of real social wealth and surplus value, that is, the working class as the only 'general class' of society.

In seeing these profound changes to the social fabric, Aricó suggested not "class parties" like the PCA had hoped to be, but "popular parties," and the reclamation of certain issues typically associated with the right wing, such as quality of life, individual rights, and the right to produce and consume. Democratization remains central because of its ability to emphasize the strength of the mass, or the majority, without necessarily directly weaponizing class as a political tool. The push to create popular parties in turn is meant to coalesce a broader coalition, and set forth a political itinerary capable of mobilizing unions, professional organizations, and students as a popular mass. The new "pole of socialist aggregation" would derive its power not from the *control* it could exert over a given group or sector, such as unions and students, but in the ability to fight for a set of democratizing reforms. Aricó wrote:

> "Esto significa que las fuerzas y voluntades que puede nuclear en su derredor no deriva del control que pueda ejercer sobre tal o cual organización especifica, sean sindicatos, organizaciones profesionales, centros estudiantiles, etcétera, si no de la capacidad de asegurar o de luchar por: políticas industriales que garanticen productividad y ocupación; servicios sociales en condiciones de responder, sin derroche ni burocratismo, a las demandas de la sociedad; reformas del estado que vigoricen un sistema económico y democraticen la función publica; reformas educativas en condiciones de modificar indebidas política de ingresos y de degradación de la enseñanza; reformas militares que restituyan a la sociedad prerrogativas que son suyas; etcétera."[142]
>
> This means that the forces and wills that can form the core perimeter [of a new socialist aggregation] do not derive from the control they can exert over any specific organization, whether they be unions, professional organizations, student centers, etc., but rather the capacity of assuring and fighting for: Industrial policies that guarantee productivity and a job; social services capable of

[142] *Imaginar el Socialismo*, 10

> responding, with neither waste nor bureaucratism, to the demands of society; state reform that invigorates the economic system and democratize public functions; educational reforms to modify unjust revenue policies and a degradation of teaching; military reform that restitutes to society prerogatives that belong to it; etcetera."

Aricó finds himself calling upon a similar coalition to bring about support for radical social change, driven by centering policies over appealing to corporatized sectors. These relatively concrete demands represent far reaching reforms that can or have been achieved by numerous capitalist states today. However, these demands are not conceived in a message of social order and obedience, but in the formulation of a *new* criticism, a *new* socialism that retains far reaching political, social, and economic goals, such as redefining the "public and the private," or the the "social and the political," such that they are no longer at odds, and can constitute a future for socialism.[143]

As Aricó reconstituted his own ideological dimensions in the 1980s, he made frequent use the political-theoretical approach he employed in the 1960s. This paper has argued that this approach came to define many of his intellectual efforts. The potential for a reconciliatory, dialogical method that would surpass orthodoxy at once permeates Aricó's thought with an air of sophistication and nuance, while also evoking a sense of being "neither here nor there," of making a constant call for critique without imagining salient prescriptions. In this way, the dialogical thrust in Aricó was not merely a theoretical tool, but a methodology that was deepened by the political experiences that surrounded and shaped his intellectual development. Paralleling the Cold War, Aricó's work serves as a complex, and sometimes *complicated* intellectual history, one that challenges the dualisms associated with the period in the same breath as it embodies

[143] Ibid, 10

them. This is in part because Aricó makes use of generalized categories, stemming from the trauma of dictatorship and exile, as a means towards the exilic reimagination that followed. In this way, Aricó suffered the push and pull of Argentina's local polarizations, as well as the Cold War's global dichotomy; this duality which was turned dominant by defeat of the guerrillas, and later the collapse of the global socialist project. A massacre, and then a spectacle, which relied on the whiplash of memory and the partition of past from present, of championing rupture and rejecting continuity. Aricó's intellectual trajectory is both a tale of the 20th century and a reading against the grain, stemming from the desire to emancipate political thought from historical (and present) contradiction.

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## Epilogue: Searching for Historiography in Aricó

After the publication of the 9th volume of *La Ciudad Futura*, José Aricó would go on writing with the magazine right up until his death in August of 1991; the publication would outlive him, continuing until 2004. Aricó was active until he died, granting interviews and writing in his last months of life. Since his death, many of his colleagues, such as Oscar del Barco and Juan Carlos Portantiero have eulogized him endlessly.[144] They praised his ability to enter academic discourse in Argentina as an autodidact, the endurance of his texts, and his enormous editorial impact. Horacio Crespo claimed that reading Marx in Spanish constituted two epochs – before and after José Aricó.[145] And yet, widespread study of Aricó's work did not emerge until nearly a decade after his death, over twenty years after the publication of *Marx and Latin America*, and forty years after the first edition of *Pasado y Presente*. This is not to say that Aricó was anything like Van Gogh, or Walter Benjamin, who were disparaged and unrecognized during their lives, only to be revered after they passed. Aricó's role as an intellectual, a militant, and a socialist was expressed through self-reflections, polemics, editorials, translations, and much more. The expansive forms of authorship undertaken by Aricó detail an intellectual pursuit that had no end, did not respect the disciplinary boundaries some are accustomed to, and found new modes of expression as his life went on. In conclusion, examining Aricó's historiographical works can shed light on the enormous amount study left to do on his thought, as well as how his methodology points us towards the urgency of the present.

[144] Burgos, *Los Gramscianos Argentinos*, 373
[145] Ibid, 374

As examined above, Aricó frequently dealt with dualities, aiming to decompose them by demonstrating their opposition as false, or mythic. In developing this almost self-contradictory approach, Aricó relied on the tensions of these preexisting categories for his theoretical fortitude. As noted in the title of his first editorial effort, one duality Aricó wished to complicate was between past and present. In his later life, Aricó's monographs undertook this contradiction more profoundly. Aricó couched historical retrospectives in a Benjaminian framework, hoping to redeem the wrongdoings of past generations writing histories that project paths for the present. In this sense, Aricó saw the structure of historical narrative not as a linear march towards the present and the future, but "also towards the past."[146] Writing in the prologue to *La Cola del Diablo*, Aricó argues that history is not merely a science, but a form remembrance. Here, he quotes Benjamin from a letter he wrote to Max Horkheimer, "what science has 'determined,' remembrance can modify. Such mindfulness can make the incomplete (happiness) into something complete, and the complete (suffering) into something incomplete."[147] In quoting Benjamin here, Aricó stipulates that the suffering of the past can be redeemed by examining history not in a strictly scientific, empirical sense, but by being indignant, by navigating against the wind and reading against the grain. The challenge, for Aricó, "is none other than ripping the past from the tradition in which the dominant classes have imprisoned it."[148] For Aricó, this took various shapes, including reappraisals of the long defunct Argentine Socialist Party, or rereading his own past in *La Cola del Diablo*. In some sense, this was Aricó's way of "blasting open the continuum

[146] Aricó, José M. *La cola del diablo: itinerario de Gramsci en América Latina*. 1. ed. Colleción Metamórfosis. Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno Ed, 2005. 29
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.

of history," of undertaking a perpetual retelling of the past, and never being satisfied with its anchorage in a dominant imagination.

As a portrait of Aricó's methodology, his attraction to Benjamin is fitting. This approach placed his gradualist and measured writing in the 1980s in a revolutionary tenor. In searching the past for the answers to the crisis of the present, Aricó engrains his historiographical approach with a similar theoretical structure as his editorial work. This methodology has informed this work's reading of "democracy" in Aricó. In attempting to find continuity, this work posited a philological revision of our preconceived notions of democracy, if only because Aricó approached the usage of any political-theoretical category in this way. As a lexical and morphological reading of democracy in Aricó, this paper has attempted to read with the intention of revealing something hidden or emphasizing that which appears to be secondary. By paying specific attention to how democracy was deployed, this work has shown how it constituted the expression of a relatively consistent theoretical approach. However, these continuities were often repudiated by Aricó himself, and how he remembered his intellectual trajectory. In remembering the 1970s, Aricó exemplified the unresolved contradictions that appear as eternal, mythic, or natural characteristics of bourgeois society that have been consummated by the conclusion of the Cold War.

And yet, this work constitutes only a single perspective in the history of Aricó, and in the intellectual history of the Cold War. Nonetheless, a perspective that decenters the institutional and state-driven narrative of the period. In telling histories of this recent past, a lack of belief in "trivial cultural progress," as Aricó wrote, becomes

essential.[149] A belief that the past is not so distant, and that it beckons for resistance. Aricó wrote in 1989:

> "Cuando las pasiones se extinguen y son materias de tratados filosóficos, la reconstrucción de un pasado es también una forma de resistencia y de manifestación de esa verdad benjaminiana de que nada de lo que ocurrió está perdido para siempre."
>
> "When our passions are extinguished and they become material for philosophical treatises, the reconstruction of the past also becomes a form of resistance, and a manifestation of that benjaminian truth, that nothing which has happened is lost forever."[150]

In examining our collective conscious with the rise of a "new" fascism, and a "new" populism, Aricó's turn to the past in his later life becomes both an object of study for historians as well as a work that retains theoretical urgencies in the present. An earnest study of Aricó's intellectual trajectory can not only inform historians on the complexities of the history of the intellectual Cold War but can help to carve paths towards an alternative Marxism in the present, around the world.

[149] Ibid.
[150] Ricca, Guillermo. *Nada por perdido: política en José María Aricó: un ensayo de lectura*. Primera edición. Colección Académico-científica. Río Cuarto, Córdoba, Argentina: UniRío Editora, Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto, 2016, 203, Translation by the Author

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### Personal

Born May 16th, 1997. San Francisco, California

### Education

Johns Hopkins University — Baltimore, MD
*Krieger School of Arts and Sciences*
Master of Arts in History (May 2019)
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### Awards

Deans Undergraduate Research Award, summer 2018 for study abroad in Argentina

### Publications

*Newspapers and Magazine Articles:*

- "The University Needs the Humanities," March 15th, 2017 in *JHU Politik* http://www.jhupolitik.org/blog/the-university-needs-the-humanities

### Papers Presented

- "Behind Revolution, Beyond Reform: José M. Aricó and the Search for a Democratic Marxism." Part of the Latin America in a Globalizing World series, March 7th, 2019